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#81

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9/11

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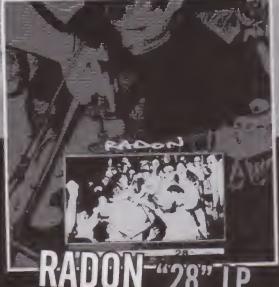
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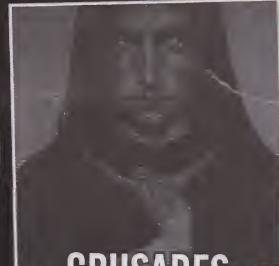
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Razorcake exists because of you. Whether you contributed any content that was printed in this issue, placed an ad, or are a reader: without your involvement, this magazine would not exist. We are a community that defies geographical boundaries or easy answers. Much of what you will find here is open to interpretation, and that's how we like it.

In mainstream culture the bottom line is profit. In DIY punk the bottom line is a personal decision. We operate in an economy of favors amongst ethical, life-long enthusiasts. And we're fucking serious about it. Profitless and proud.

There's nothing more laughable than the general public's perception of punk. Endlessly misrepresented and misunderstood. Exploited and patronized. Let the squares worry about "fitting in." We know who we are.

Within these pages you'll find unwavering beliefs rooted in a culture that values growth and exploration over tired predictability.

There is a rumbling dissonance reverberating within the inner walls of our collective skull. Thank you for contributing to it.

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More Corndog than Corndog

I understand the impulse—something is so outrageous or cool or powerful that people exclaim, “That’s more punk than punk.” It happens all the time in the press releases that accompany records that get sent to us for review. I expect clueless dildos and mainstream ideologues to say it. It’s a cliché. It sounds cool. It marginalizes punk’s power and patronizes it, while making the commentator sound edgy™. Easy enough to ignore. Lazy code words. Believe me, I understand backhanded compliments.

I don’t want to surprise anyone, so let’s be clear. *Razorcake* is a DIY punk zine. It’s deliberate. Those words actually mean something. It’s not a tagline for product. We actively push away major corporations from being in our print and web pages by not covering their cultural harvestings of viable subcultures or accepting their money for advertisements. I think that looking at our relationship—you and me—as simply producer and consumer is faulty and fucked up. There’s a huge chasm between sustainability and opulence, between being intentionally bad capitalists and douchey entrepreneurs in punk clothing.

I believe in a big punk umbrella, of punks interacting with the world-at-large. Look at our “One Punk’s Guide to...” series. Silent films, Otis Redding, science fiction, soccer, poetry, vinyl records—all seen through DIY punks’ lenses. I’m not saying Otis Redding was a punk. That’d be stupid. I’m saying that there’s an exchange of ideas, a Venn diagram. There’s something to learn from interwoven strands of culture, and we’re coming from a decidedly DIY punk perspective. Why? Because that’s how we self-identify. It’s who we are.

Let’s flip flop the saying for a second to see how fucking stupid “more punk than punk” sounds to me. “That’s more scrap booking

than scrap booking!” “That’s more reggae than reggae!” “That’s more shoes than shoes!” “That’s more jazz than jazz!” “That’s more corndog than corndog!” “That’s more hip hop than hip hop!” It doesn’t work.

The reason punk regularly gets evoked is that it’s still inherently powerful. It’s a benchmark. It exists if you or I don’t believe in it, listen to it, or live it. Punk sells or doesn’t sell and continues to survive and thrive. Counter to what many of its once-most vocal supporters—many who have cashed in their chips, yet are collecting punk unemployment benefits—are saying that it’s all been done before and it’s dead, punk’s just fine. It’s the right amount of healthy and diseased. Awesome and awful. Brilliant and stupid. Petty and transcendent. Truly global and hyper-localized. Obvious and still secret. Young and old. Nostalgic and forward-pointing. Drunk and sober.

Here’s where I’m chafed. There is so much fantastic DIY punk out there that is still marginalized and overlooked at the expense of “more punk than punk.” *Razorcake*’s coverage is deep. It is wide. And we barely scratch the surface. If it were up to me, everyone would listen to the new Chantey Hook, Future Virgins, and Radioactivity records while reading this. Complex, driven, powerful. Some hopeful, crazy-great punk. That’s what I celebrate.

So, let’s make a pact.

Don’t waste your time. If you’ve given up on punk, move along and go get “more techno than techno” or “more sweater vest than sweater vest” or whatever. Just, please, don’t waste my time lazily swatting at the very thing that I cherish and value... because there’s only one thing “that’s more punk than punk.”

It’s this thing called punk.

—Todd Taylor

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This issue is dedicated to the cutie below.

Cover design by Patrick Lillard,
plillard.com, from photos by Ryan
Maddox and Paul Silver.

“You think a lifetime of taking shit from people makes you stronger?... That would be nice, wouldn’t it?”

—Cheryl Klein, *Lilac Mines*

Violet Pinkel

Your dad better draw you a funny birthday card every year until you’re out of the house... or he’s fired.

Congratulations Crystal and Bill.

Razorcake/ Gorsky, Inc. Board of Directors: Todd Taylor, Sean Carswell, Daryl Gussin, Dan Clarke, Katy Spining, Leo Emil Tober III, and Catherine Casada Hornberger.

THANK YOU: Crystallized molecule refracting an eight-armed music beast? The smashed impact of Pegboy’s Strong Reaction cover? Soak in the complex graphic mysteries of Patrick Lillard’s graphic design and thank Paul Silver and Ryan Maddox for the source photos; Dance, dance, dance. Hear the crackling of technology under your boots thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean’s column; The goat of Mendes mixed with Hello Kitty mixed with Balzac (the band) thanks to Marcos Siref for his illo. in Jim’s column; Hello hog-riding pizza, my tasty, predictable friend thanks to Jackie Rusted for her illo. in Cassie’s column; Interrogative despair? Thanks to Alex Barrett? For Nerb’s column?; “Raw meatball crystal ball, how many beers are in my future?” thanks to Eric Baskauskas for his Chicken illo.; Yoda backpack, toe tag-dead thanks to Genesis Bautista for her Nardwuar illo.; In a fair and pleasant world, Gene Simmons would mow Dale’s childhood lawn in full makeup (the boots would be aerators) thanks to Bill Pinkel for his illo.; Talk about an article and a set of illustrations that could go so wrong and inflammatory, but do the opposite thanks to Donna Ramone and Steve Thueson for the words and illo. for “9/11 Never Let Me Forget”; This house is protected by flying spaghetti thanks to Kevin Dunn, Patrick Houdek, and Matt Average for the Muhammadali interview, photos, and layout; A roll of cookie dough and street fighting. You think you know about such things until French Exit invert it into an interview that was basically a laugh track thanks to Garrett Barnwell, El Diablo, Paul Silver, and Ian Jones for the interview, photos, and transcription; There is a little radioactive man on every spread in the interview. It’s my little “Where’s Waldo?” for this issue thanks to Paul Silver, El Diablo, and Ryan Maddox for their Radioactivity photos; The S.E. Hinton of power pop thanks to Scott Bass, Jason Ross, Jack Callaghan, Rachel Gouk, Ron Rudy, and Lauren Measure for the M.O.T.O. interview, photos, and layout.

#81’s rotation of music, zines, books, and video reviewers—revmats from overflowing review tubs: Garrett Barnwell, Genevieve Armstrong, Jackie Rusted, John Mule, Lisa Weiss, Rich Cocksedge, Sal Lucci, Kayla Greet, MP Johnson, Bryan Static, Art Ettinger, Alanna Why, Sean Arenas, Indiana Laub, Keith Rosson, Matt Average, Matt Seward, Billups Allen, Ty Stranglehold, Matt Werts, Kurt Morris, Chris Terry, Ashley Ravelo, Camille Reynolds, Michael T. Fournier, Tim Brooks, Mike Frame, Juan Espinosa, Chad Williams, The Lord Kveldulfr, Sean Koepenick, Vincent, Dave Williams, Jim Joyce, Kristen K., Steve Adamyk, Ian Wise, Jimmy Alvarado, Bianca, Nerb, Jim Woster, Craven Rock, Ollie Mikse, Aphid Peewit, and James Meier.

If you’re a woman who is knowledgeable about DIY punk, are good with deadlines, and are open to the editorial process, this is an open invitation to drop us a line about doing reviews, interviews, articles, or a webcolumn for *Razorcake*.

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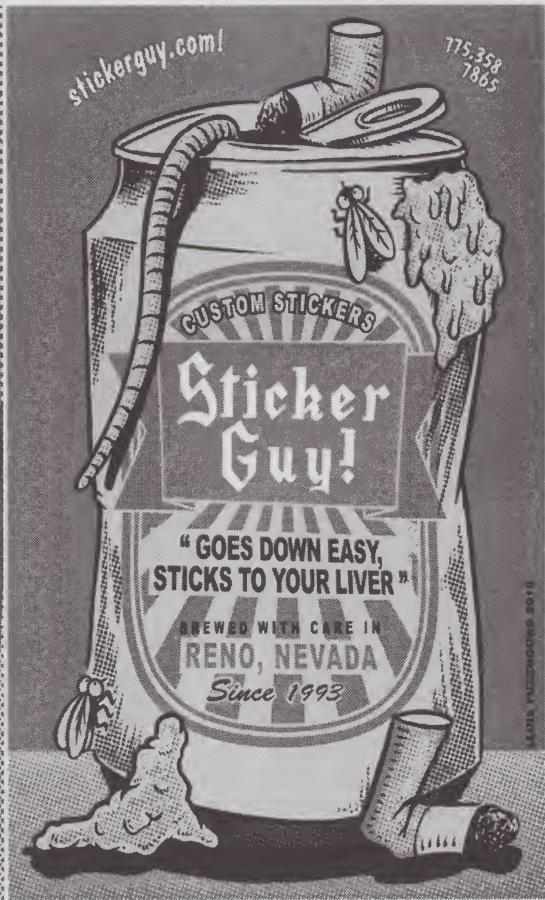


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The following folks stepped forward to help us do our part over the past two months. Without their help, *Razorcake* wouldn't be what it is. Todd Taylor, Daryl Gussin, Sean Carswell, Skinny Dan, Katy Spining, Candice Tobin, Kari Hamanaka, Matthew Hart, Donna Ramone, Phill Legault, Chris Baxter, Mary Clare Stevens, James Hernandez, Marty Ploy, Rene Navarro, Billy Kostka III, Derek "nutritional yeast" Whipple, Jason Willis, Janeth Galaviz, Rishbha Bhagi, Adrian Chi, Megan Pants, Alex Martinez, Jimmy Alvarado, Matt Average, Ever Velasquez, Joe Dana, Christina Zamora, Juan Espinosa, Meztil Hernandez, Sean Arenas, Aaron Kovacs, Nicole Macias, Yvonne Drazan, Julia Smut, Jenn Witte, Dave Eck, Chris Pepus, George Lopez, Tim Burkett, Jeff Proctor, Josh Rosa, Toby Tober, Sal Lucci, Johnny Volume, Jennifer Federico, Jennifer Whiteford, Kayla Greet, Lory Gil, Nighthawk, Marcos Siref, Steve Thueson, Evan Wolff, Cassie J. Sneider, Vadim Dozmanov, Ronnie Sullivan, Marcus Solomon, Bill Pinkel, Kurt Morris, Jason Armadillo, Laura Collins, Nation of Amanda, Eric Baskauskas, Vee Liu, Bianca Barragan, Russ Van Cleave, Christine Arguello, Simon Sotelo, Susan Chung, Robert El Diablo, Bryan Static, Mitch Clem, John Miskelly, Jamie L. Rotante, Genesis Bautista, Andy Garcia, Ian Jones, Andy Higgins, Mike Huguenor, Chris Rager, Jamie Elmer, Taylor Farmer, Nick De Sena, and Adam Perry.

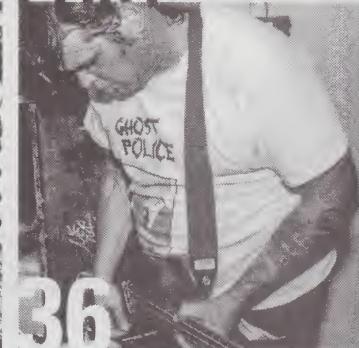
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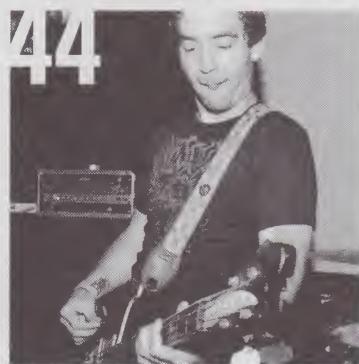


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</div



A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

"We don't have to give up the good shit just to have the new shit."

A Little Bit of Springtime in the Back of my Mind

"I can still sing your favorite song"

Listening to Leatherface can be like reading Plato. You know you're not going to get everything the first time through. You'll have to go through it again and again, every time your mind will drift into new territories, new thoughts, new experiences. Maybe you'll never get it. Maybe getting it was never the point. Maybe it's all about the meditations Leatherface and Plato inspire.

Mush is back in high rotation. It's my favorite Leatherface album. I'd burned a CD copy of it back when blank CDs were expensive and only top-of-the-line computers came with CD burners. I listened to that fucker through cheap stereos and blown out truck speakers for years. When portable mp3 players came out, I ripped a copy of the CD to my computer and listened to it through tinny ear buds. Now I have a copy of the vinyl. I can listen to it through a quality stereo in a quiet apartment. I can't help feeling like I'm hearing the album for the first time.

It's hard to describe exactly the difference, so I'll talk about it the way Frankie Stubbs would in a Leatherface lyric: through a crazy metaphor. In my case, I'm going to use a circle. Try this exercise. Draw three quarters of a circle on a piece of paper. Ask someone else to describe the shape. They'll tell you it's a circle. They'll do this because our minds work this way. We see three quarters of a circle and we fix it in our heads. Our imagination draws the rest.

All my other copies of *Mush* have been three-quarter circles. I could hear seventy-five percent of the music. My imagination fixed the rest. The vinyl is drawing the whole circle for me. Now that I have it, I can't stop listening to it.

I don't know who bootlegged this record so that I could finally have a copy without paying crazy online prices, but I want to take a second to thank him or her.

*"We don't make bargains
and don't deal with markers"*

The fact that someone did bootleg *Mush*, that a copy of it somehow made it to my local record shop, that I could buy it for the same price as any other new album, and that I can now hear the music as it was recorded and intended to be heard all has me thinking about technology and our relationship with it. Because here is the simple fact: if you

want to hear the music in the most realistic reproduction, vinyl is still the best technology for that. Electronic files like mp3s are still the worst technology for that.

Meditate on this with me.

When we talk about technology, we talk about "progress" and "advancement." Both of these terms suggest that the latest technology is the best. So we tend to accept the idea that newer is better. We tend to ignore the question: better at what?

Obviously, mp3s are better at being portable. If you want to listen to a facsimile of music while you jog or ride your bike or walk to the post office or take a train across town, mp3 players are great. I have one for all of these reasons. I never buy mp3s, though. Sometimes I steal them. If I like a band or an album, I'll buy the actual music on vinyl if it's available or on CD otherwise. Not because of the artwork or the feel of the object in my hand or any of that. I buy it because it sounds better. I don't buy mp3s because they sound like shit. We don't value them because they're not very valuable. I don't have a problem with any of this. I, in fact, like it a lot.

I do have a problem with the idea that records and CDs are worthless now that we can have mp3s. I have a bigger problem with the possibility that mp3s will replace vinyl or CDs. If we listen to our cultural messages, vinyl and CDs are supposed to be dead; mp3s are supposed to be the future. If we want to get into the 21st century, we need to buy our shit from iTunes or whatever.

When I think of this, I think of an essay written by a feminist back in the '70s. A woman named Laura Mulvey wrote about movies. She said, if you ask whose perspective the camera represents, you'll notice that we're almost always looking through the eyes of a wealthy, white, heterosexual male. The camera shows us opulence as if it belongs to us. It shows us women as if they're sexual objects we possess. Mulvey called this the male gaze.

I'll let you read Mulvey's essay and decide for yourself whether or not you agree. It's called "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." It's readily available on a quick web search.

What I'm more interested in here, though, is this idea of a gaze. More specifically, I want to ask whose perspective is telling us to get into the 21st century, whose perspective treats every technological change as progress

or advancement without asking what is lost. In the case of mp3s (or other electronic files like WMAs), it's Apple's gaze or Microsoft's gaze. Both of these companies control the trade of these items. If you're listening to portable music through an electronic file, Apple or Microsoft made money off it. They made more money off your music fandom than any band. Even if you steal the music, Apple or Microsoft make money off the technology that houses the music, the device through which you acquire the music, and the device through which you hear the music. So, of course they want you to believe that their shitty platform is the future; is the best. When they pay the *New York Times* for a full page ad or advertise on any number of online cultural industries, they're paying for the notion that they are the future and anyone who resists is hopelessly old fashioned.

Apple and Microsoft didn't make shit off my *Mush* bootleg. I used cash to buy it in a record store with an old electronic cash register. I play it through my home stereo that I paid cash for in stores. From the corporate cultural gaze they're laying down, this is a problem. From the I-want-to-listen-to-good-music gaze, this is a solution.

*"Everybody knows how
to cook baked potatoes"*

In the middle of side two of *Mush*, just when the album should be losing steam, we get my second favorite song: "Baked Potato." Through that gravel he's grinding in his throat, Frankie Stubbs sings, "Everybody knows how to cook baked potatoes." When I first heard this album in the pre-Google days, there was something poignant about this line. The song starts off with Frankie talking about all the deep ideas he's read in books and argued in pubs, and the one thing that connects war refugees and the Queen of England and all of us in between is the fact that anyone can feed herself something simple and beautiful. In the pre-Google days, if you wanted to cook a baked potato, you knew how. You turned on the oven, stuck in a potato, waited until it was soft in the middle, and pulled it out.

Now if want to know how to cook a baked potato, you Google that shit. You find out what temperature to preheat the oven and how long to leave it in. More to the point, you turn on a computer powered by the fossil fuels for which we're fighting wars and

choking out the life on the planet, initiate a microchip composed of rare earths that may or may not have come from as deep as four miles below the surface of the ocean, bounce a message off a satellite in outer space to be received by other computing devices likewise powered by fossil fuels, connecting to other devices through cables that run underground or underwater throughout the earth, just to find someone who has made the effort to tell you a temperature and a time. And the kicker is, the potato won't cook any faster or taste any better than if you just rubbed some twigs together, started a little fire, and cooked the potato on a stick. Unless, of course, you use a microwave or the potato is a GM food, in which cases, it'll taste worse.

From the perspective of our contemporary culture, this all makes perfect sense. In fact, through the corporate gaze, we see that we should regularly purchase a "new and improved" computing device every six months or so and "recycle" the old one by sending it to a landfill in China or Ghana, where the toxicity will breed cancer in the local population.

"Do as you would be, but don't buy it."

None of this is to say that I don't do ridiculous web searches every day, use the fuck out of fossil fuels, and do nearly every other evil thing that contemporary consumer society demands of me. I'm part of this world, too.

All I'm saying is that we should think a little more about technology and our individual perspectives relating to it. We don't have to give up the good shit just to have the new shit. In most cases, we don't. The real future probably looks more like records with download codes instead of an Apple world of all mp3s. And we still have the ability to make our choices. I'd still rather have the vinyl without the mp3s than vice versa.

Of course, this can expand beyond music. We don't have to give up books to have ebooks (which, let's face it, aren't books at all; they're computer files). We don't have to give up magazines to have web sites. We don't have to give up eavesdropping in public to have a Twitter account; we can encounter incessant, inane chatter both places. And so on.

Mush the CD wraps up with a cover of "Message in a Bottle," which was always a letdown to me. After all that Leatherface, I don't want to hear The Police—even if Leatherface is doing The Police. *Mush* the LP ends with "Dead Industrial Atmosphere." The title sounds like a bummer, but the song is beautiful. Frankie finishes it up by singing, "This is our world. We are the waters that learned to work, and you should smell the others." I don't know what he meant by that when he wrote it twenty-three years ago. I know that it sounds like an homage to the analog now.

—Sean Carswell



We tend to accept the idea
that newer is better.

We tend to ignore the
question: better at what?



“Like peanut butter and chocolate or alcohol and cocaine.”

Very Metal

Can we talk about Babymetal?

If you haven't heard, Babymetal is the unstoppable musical phenomenon out of Japan that combines heavy metal and J-pop. Read that sentence again please.

The band is fronted by three Japanese girls—the sixteen-year-old Sui-Metal and her super cute back-up singers/dancers Moametal and Yuimetal—who all came up through the Japanese idol system.

Watching their breakout video “Give Me Chocolate” is a schizophrenic experience. The first thing that jumps out at you is how ferocious and fast the music is. The musicians, and there are a ton of them, are all dressed in skeleton body suits, and they aren't fucking around. This shit is HEAVY.

Then the girls start singing and we are somehow back in the realm of spastic WTF J-pop. The choreography is intense. The girls do something impossibly adorable every three seconds. I don't think I've ever had this much energy.

(The song is about a girl who would like some chocolate but is worried about her weight and features an onomatopoeic gun battle as part of the refrain, all of which is beside the point.)

Did I mention that this shit is heavy? That's the problem with trying to explain Babymetal. Once I've convinced you that this is serious metal, the pop vocals undo the explanation. And vice versa. Babymetal resists the hegemony of Aristo-Boolean dichotomy. Babymetal is joyful and defiant at once. Something magical transmogrifies in the brain when listening to Babymetal. Like peanut butter and chocolate or alcohol and cocaine.

I played the video for my wife who was predictably unimpressed. “It sounds like a video game.”

Exactly! But now it occurs to me there is a whole generation of kids today¹ that caught the heavy metal virus through video games as opposed to the way my generation was exposed to it: while doing bong rips in my best friend's older brother's black lit bedroom.

Anyway, my daughter is intrigued. She agrees that they are cute, which is enough. I've been pushing Babymetal pretty hard. We're listening to it now. When my wife came home during the stirring conclusion of “Uki Uki Midnight” she went right to the computer and lowered the volume.

“Holy smokes. That's a little much.”

That's right. I bought the album online. I listen to it every day. It's not just metal and J-pop, but a musical smorgasbord that cozies up to techno, collides with rap, bats an eye at dub, and does something unspeakable to reggae.

On the metal side there's speed, thrash, and power metal, by turns blisteringly quick and symphonically operatic. It shouldn't work, but it totally does. It feels like they've conjured a new musical genre into existence.

Part of the thrill of listening to Baby Metal is the strangeness of hearing something that you were never meant to hear. I mean, whatever Babymetal is, it isn't for us. It occurred to me that every nation on the planet has an amazing metal band thrashing away in obscurity. I searched Google for: “Who is the best metal band in...” and plugged in a dozen countries. While a lot of the results were predictably boring, I made some amazing discoveries.

For instance, did you know that Chthonic is a Taiwanese power metal band that makes aggressive protest music that taps into the nation's struggle against China?

But I digress. After watching legions of bands from all over the world decked out in corpse paint, armored leather, and fake blood, Baby Metal started to seem a lot less ridiculous.

What's stranger: An adolescent girl singing her little heart out about chocolate or a grown man dressed like a ghoul who pretends to communicate with demons while growling like a constipated goat?

That's some silly shit, right? And who doesn't love chocolate? In fact, my daughter and I are eating some right now. You could say we're having a moment. You could also say I'm pushing this bonding over Babymetal too far. But I have my reasons.

My daughter is ten. Pretty soon I'm going to be roped into going to One Direction concerts or whatever kids today² listen to. Fuck that. I'll gladly put up with goofy pop lyrics I don't understand if the back-up band makes the hair metal acts of my youth look like the candy asses they undoubtedly were.

But there's an element of nostalgia to all this.

When I was in the Navy, our ship did a Westpac—a six-month tour of the Western Pacific—and we spent a lot of time in the Philippines. There was a club in Olongapo my shipmates and I used to frequent whenever we were in Subic Bay and we were in Subic

Bay a lot. It was called California Jam a.k.a. Cal Jam and it had a house band with over a dozen members. They were an amazing cover band and each member was an expert at a particular vocal style so that it didn't matter if they were playing AC/DC, Van Halen, or Queen's “Bohemian Rhapsody,” whoever was singing had the song down cold.

It was incredible. Granted, cover bands are for people who have stopped going to see live music. But I was eighteen. Just out of high school. My taste wasn't all that sophisticated. (It still isn't.) (Obviously.) I hadn't been exposed to a lot of great live music yet. After the Ramones, the house band at Cal Jam was easily the second best live musical performance of my young life.

We kept sailing away for what we thought was the last time and then we'd sail back and we'd get to see the house band at Cal Jam again. (And do all the other things that sailors do on liberty.) So even then it was a nostalgia trip. Because who else would a medley of middle-of-the-road rock and roll be for but drunken sailors?

It's not just the house band at Cal Jam that's prickling my nostalgia, but Mötley Crüe and Headbangerz Ball, and basement bong hits and Cliff Burton's bass solo and nights on Fiesta Island when my shipmates and I would walk the beach with a head full of speed and every truck shining its lights into the fire pits was blasting the same station so that “Ride the Lightning” was as constant as the salt in the air, the surf on the shore, the sailors collapsing in the sand.

So who is Babymetal for?

The way Babymetal slips in and out of three or four musical genres every single song with a level of technical proficiency that seems well beyond the capacity of most first world kids today³ feels like whoever is behind Babymetal is sending America a message: get with the program.

Maybe they're on to something. Maybe heavy metal isn't supposed to be dangerous. Maybe, just maybe, after a long and unsightly incubation period, Babymetal has perfected heavy metal, transformed it into something beautiful, something—holy smokes —the whole family can enjoy.

Which brings me to the flip side. Are the Metals—Sui, Moa, and Yui—happy? I think of the long hours they must spend perfecting their dance moves to this heavy and intense

1. One.

2. That's two.

3. The third and last time I say “kids today,” I promise.



MARCOS SIREF

What's stranger: An adolescent girl singing her little heart out about chocolate or a grown man dressed like a ghoul who pretends to communicate with demons while growling like a constipated goat?

music that was probably forced on them the way I'm forcing it on my daughter. I can't imagine my daughter wanting to spend all that time and expend all that energy rehearsing, getting into costume, and performing in front of tens of thousands of fans. I imagine the idol system being comparable to training to be a sumo wrestler: ninety percent shit work, ten percent the roar of the crowd, the thrill of being on stage, the rush from all that adoration, etc. But then it's back to the shit work. (The Navy was like that, too.) To quote one of the commenters on YouTube, "Can someone just give these chicks some chocolate already?"

My daughter would never make it in the idol system. She is the most unflappable person I know. She's not afraid of anyone,

but she's modest in her needs and would rather read a book than go to a party. She's goddamn serene is what she is. In other words, not like me at all.

As a parent, there are a million ways I exert my influence on her in hopefully positive ways: through instruction, by example, by making her listen to Babymetal; but at this point there's just as much that I can learn from her, like the way she takes everything in stride and just goes with the flow, whether its advice from her soccer coach or criticism from her hotheaded dad who can't understand why he still has to tell the decade-old human under his supervision to make her bed and brush her teeth.

So I'm not a perfect parent. I wasn't a perfect son. And I'm sure as hell not a perfect

spouse. None of us are perfect. Maybe that's the appeal of pop music: the possibility of perfection, a closed system where everything slots neatly into place in a way that can't be improved upon and feels just right. We don't get many of those moments, which is why we need metal: to rage against all the imperfection in our lives.

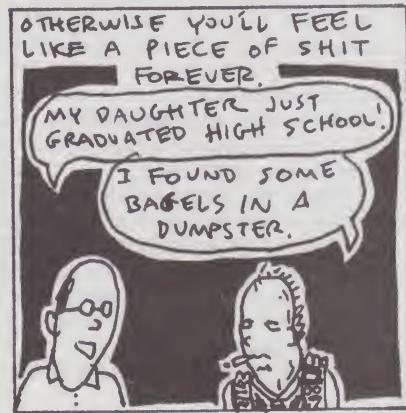
That's the magic of Babymetal. It has less to do with the fusion of genres than the marriage of perfection and imperfection—our desire for it, our resistance against it, the struggle of being pushed and pulled in so many directions and somehow making order out of the chaos.

If only I could convince my wife.

—Jim Ruland

MY SIXTY-FIFTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT

REFLECTIONS ON TURNING 40



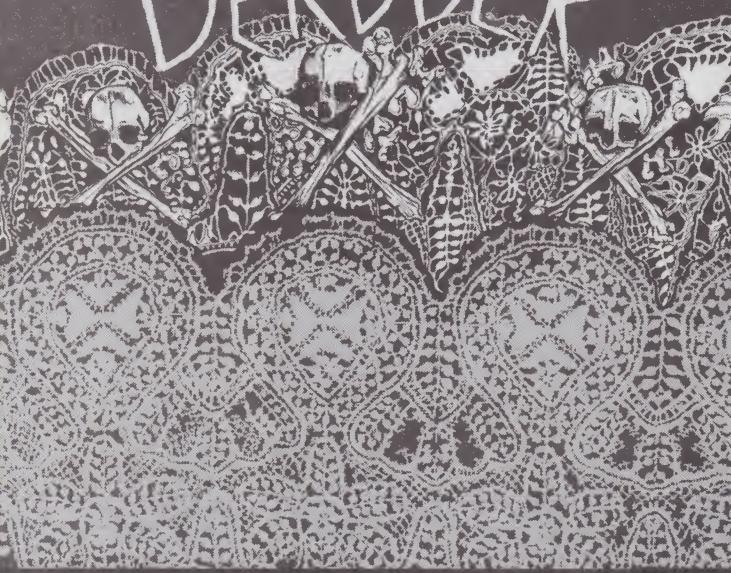
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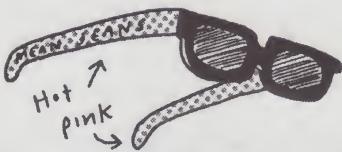
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LIZ PRINCE'S GUIDE TO

PUNK ROCK SUMMER-FUN



Wearing plastic sunglasses over my regular glasses.

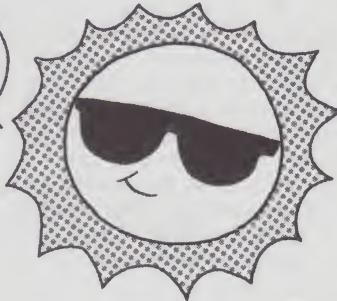


Going to 7-11 on July 11th for free slurpee day and remembering that I don't really like slurpees.



Showing off my party skin and punxy physique at the beach because I finally give no fcks.

suck it, hater.



Futilely flip off the sun when it gets too hot.

Sweat to death at a cramped basement show.





“The point
is, we are
all posers.”

HERE COMES
SUCCESS!
CASSIE J. SNEIDER

Born to be Mild

The bookstore in Cleveland called to say that the power had gone out in the oppressive 105 degree heat, frying the air conditioner, leaving the store in darkness, and canceling my book signing. This left me with two whole days to kill in the upper Midwest and no idea how to spend them. My original plan had been to check out the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, despite the truth that it was the most Dad-In-A-Bowling-Shirt-With-Flames-On-It possible way to spend a Thursday afternoon. But now I had no real reason to drive to Cleveland, which I imagined to be a living, breathing Harvey Pekar comic. I hoped that inspiration would lead me anywhere else: maybe a giant statue, an endless flea market, or a town with a human-sized rubber band ball.

I drove the rented Smart Car along I-90, stopping for coffee at a travel plaza and eventually spilling a little on the shirt I was wearing, the one that said *A WAY OF LIFE* with a babe in a bikini sitting on the back of a Harley driven by someone who was maybe an original member of Steppenwolf. I have an enormous collection of motorcycle shirts, which I wear with the confidence of a six-year-old in a cape going through a Batman phase. I don't own a motorcycle. Actually, regular bicycles were ruined for me twenty years ago by an episode of *Rescue: 911!* where one wrong hand signal lead to a lifetime of reconstructive surgeries. My inner self is much freer than my actual self, and the way I express this is through how I dress. If I had to describe my style, it would be somewhere between “out-of-control teen on an episode of *Ricki Lake*” and “alcoholic dad mows the lawn in short-shorts.” So, this is why I really freaked out when I saw a sign that said, **STURGIS: 31 MILES.**

“The Motherland!” I said to the empty car. I didn't know when the Sturgis biker rally was, but I imagined the town in the off-season to be teeming with dudes who looked like my true self. I had never really gotten into darts, but I would be willing to try with the right friendly group of small-town outlaw bikers.

When I was nineteen, I worked at a Hot Topic sister-store. There I would unpack boxes of Ramones shirts and very expensive bondage pants that were usually purchased by well-meaning aunts with quirky nieces just getting into punk. From the high horse of my minimum wage job, I stewed in

anger at all the posers buying Mall Punk™ clothing and thought about how much more authentic I was—that I was wearing the T-shirt of a band I didn't know given to me by some creepy older guy I had made out with the week before.

I still remember when Raul, the only other punk kid in my high school, said, “What do you mean you don't know who the Lunachicks are?” I remember when my first real boyfriend shamed me into memorizing every word of “The Decline” by NOFX, and when my cousin made me feel like a loser because I had never heard of the hardcore band Indecision. Every time this happened, I felt overwhelmed by the same feeling of embarrassment you might have if you found out you'd been walking around with your zipper open all day. After this embarrassment wore off, I would track down the album I was supposed to know, read all the liner notes, become an expert, and then buy the albums of all the bands thanked on that album. This shame made me a better person. Not just a better person, but a better person with an enormous collection of scratched CDs taking up space in my mom's basement. The point is, we are all posers. You can either learn from it or you can just live with your head up your butt as a person who does not know the ecstasy of cultural elitism.

I drove north at the arrow toward Sturgis, listening to satellite radio, flipping between Underground Garage and Dr. Laura's conservative advice program. I stopped at a visitor's area to pee and thumbed through pamphlets on the natural wonders of Southern Michigan. There was a mineral museum, a few vineyards, mini golf, but no mention of Sturgis. I assumed that the Michigan Tourism Bureau was trying to keep the outlaw culture under wraps, driving my biker brothers underground. *Of course there would be no informational pamphlet.*

When I got back in the car, Dr. Laura was calling a desperate woman “an unpaid whore” for living with her boyfriend. I flipped to the deep cut vinyl station, getting myself amped up for adventure. From what I could see, there wasn't a whole lot going on in Michigan, just trees and every so often a Panera alongside a Walmart. As Thin Lizzy flooded the tiny speakers of the Smart Car, I thought about cool one-liners my character would say in the movie *Cassie Gets Jumped into a Biker Gang*, like, “*What's a gal gotta*

do to get some action around here?” and “*You and me are gonna make it out of this one horse town, baby,*” and, “*Bulldozer, I'm pregnant. I need five hundred bucks.*”

I followed the signs for Sturgis, where the main highway turned into a smaller two-lane road. I saw a Pizza Hut, a Goodwill in a strip mall, and a roadside motel. I kept driving, thinking I had missed it somehow, then turned around. A printer. A post office. An Applebees. I decided to stop at the motel I had seen, settle in, get gussied up, and then paint the town. I got out of the car and practiced my line: “*What's a gal gotta do to get some action around here?*”

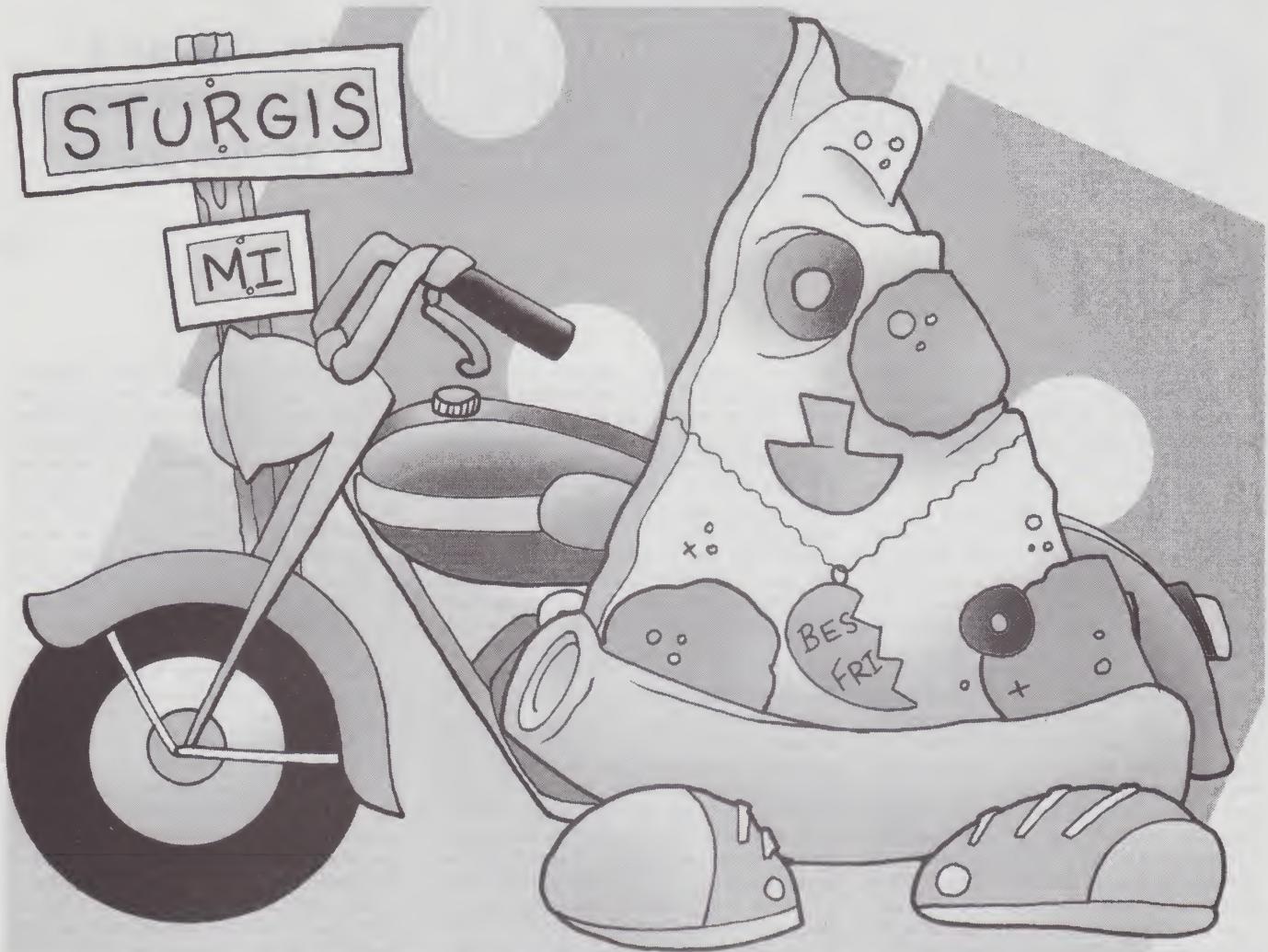
The motel was named The American Inn and had one of those post-9/11 signs that were red, white, and blue to disarm racist truckers. Incense was burning in the motel office and there was the distant sound of daytime television. Behind the counter was a calendar of Ganesha, and next to the bell was some kind of urn and a bowl of candy mints. I rang the bell and a teenage girl came out of a doorway.

“Hi,” I said, perhaps too eagerly. “I'm looking to get a room.” Wordlessly, the girl handed me some forms to fill out. I wrote down my credit card number and the license plate of the Smart Car. It was awful to be a teenager anywhere, but to be a teenager working the desk of a family-owned motel in the middle of nowhere seemed to be its own particular hell, the kind where if you don't somehow discover Bikini Kill or land a scholarship to a liberal university on the coast, you are totally fucked. She handed me the key and a receipt. “Um, hey, one question. Where do all the bikers hang out?”

The teen clerk looked at me with complete confusion. “What?”

“Um, like, when the bikers come to town, do you know where they go? Like, is there a bar where they all hang out and shoot pool?” To me, we were partaking in a normal conversation. This was all just a day in the life.

“Uh, I have no idea. There's a bar in the Applebees.” I could tell by the way she was looking at me that she genuinely did not know what I was talking about. Maybe her parents had shielded her from the reality of outlaw biking. They probably just wanted her to marry someone nice who would take over their business when they retired. I decided to selflessly leave behind a copy of my book in the hopes that she would Google my



JACKIE RUSTED

This **shame** made me a better person.

name and be swept away by a hurricane of subcultural excitement.

I pulled the car around to where my room scenically overlooked a dumpster, and beyond, a grassy lot behind a gas station. This wasn't the worst view in my extended tour of America's one-star hotels. Outside of Nashville, I had gotten a room at three in the morning to discover the window looked directly upon a 24-hour gentlemen's club with a fifty foot sign flashing the words BOOBIE BUNGALOW in red neon, which I later told my stepfather about, and he immediately Google-Earthered it to confirm the location.

I unlocked the door and rolled my suitcase onto the industrial carpeting, patterned in a brown-beige meant to disguise any long-suffering death that might have taken place on it. I drew open the blinds to let the last rays of daytime pour into the room. Then, I put on the television, took off my pants, and tried to tap into the weak WiFi signal. I threw the electronic keycard onto my clothes

and I noticed it advertised a Pizza Hut. No matter how small a town is, there is always a Pizza Hut or a Dominos available to the desperate traveler. It's not bad pizza. It's just by no means what you actually want to be eating, like a guy you went on a date with who committed some minor infraction like mentioning *Family Guy* as his favorite show or mispronouncing a word like *epitome*. Nothing racist-joke-unforgivable, but you'd have to be really hard-up to give him a call.

I checked my email, then Facebook, then Googled my name to see if anyone new had reviewed my book. Then I looked up Sturgis, Michigan. The only things that came up were the Chamber of Commerce, a funeral home, and the current local weather.

"Okay," I thought, then typed in STURGIS, MICHIGAN BIKER.

Then Google, petting a cat in the shadow of its golden lair, threw back its head and laughed. *DO YOU MEAN STURGIS, SOUTH DAKOTA?*

Suddenly, it all made sense: why the motel clerk had looked at me like I was a space alien and why I hadn't seen a single motorcycle on my cruise through town. Of course the bikers wouldn't be whooping it up at the bar in an Applebees. The Sturgis Biker Rally I had been dreaming of all these years while folding my laundry was actually in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Not Michigan. I was in the wrong Sturgis.

I stared at the ceiling for a long time. When the reality of my mistake set in, I reached down onto the floor and grabbed the motel key and my phone. Then I called the only friend I knew in this town, a friend who wouldn't judge me, who didn't care if I was a poser or had never ridden a motorcycle. A friend who is always there, no matter where I am, to come over with breadsticks in twenty minutes or less.

—Cassie J. Sneider



AMERICAN GRILLED CHEESE REVIEW

REV. NORB

HUH?

Is my column due already? How can it be due already? What the hell am I gonna write about? Do I have anything to write about? Did I just end those two sentences with a preposition? Do I need to manufacture some petty, nonsensical irritant and write an eighteen hundred word rant about it? Or should I just wing it? Does winging it ever actually work? Is playing a show without a set list punk? Or is it hippie? Is it more punk if a set list-less set is undertaken because one just doesn't give a fuck, or is it still the same, punkness-wise? Don't I have to be at work soon? How the hell am I going to write a column and go to work? How am I ever going to go to work today? Don't these people know i was announcing roller derby all weekend? Don't these people understand my civic responsibility of drinking beer all night after a derby tournament? Are they really going to deprive me of my cultural obligations? And what about Naomi? And who stole the keeshka? And why did Yaschel bring it back? Didn't he know how firm and round and fully packed it was? And what the fuck is up with the fan in my laptop? I already had it replaced once, how can it be broken again? Am I going to have to set the laptop on a sack of frozen French fries to keep it cool enough to write this column? And who the hell buys frozen French fries, anyway? Can you wait a second so that I can get the sack of frozen French fries? Why the hell would my ex-girlfriend buy a sack of frozen French fries? Did she know my laptop cooling fan was busted? Did you know my ex-girlfriend moved out last month? Is it surprising that there is still a heaping mound of her debris left in my house, the most useful item of which is a sack of frozen WalMart™ Great Value® French fries? Did I ever tell you that I never actually asked her to move in in the first place, she just told me she needed to stay at my house for two weeks because she was between apartments, and then BLAM, she just moved all her shit in and stayed for five years? Would it surprise you if I told you that that all ended about as well as one would imagine? Why do I hate having other people's stuff in my house so much? Is it because I perceive it to lower the average aggregate cool value of my surroundings? I think that's probably it, don't you? And why is everything I own broken? Does it make sense that I have one cell phone that won't charge a battery, an identical cell phone that won't do anything BUT charge a battery, and

that the battery, when charged, won't even last eight hours? Does it make sense that my DVD player broke, my CD player broke, Xbox™ 360 is a non-functioning doorstop, my 61" HDTV needs a new lamp, but the 25" TV and VCR I bought in 1991 are still working just perfectly? Does this, somehow, support your cynical view of the modern universe the way it does mine? Did you see the new X-Men™ movie? Did you love Quicksilver, even though he was represented as a kleptomaniac suburban brat named "Peter," as opposed to some arrogant Eastern European type named "Pietro" who always has some kinda stick up his butt? Didn't it crush your soul a little bit that he was wearing a fucking Pink Floyd T-shirt when he perpetrated all those high-speed hijinx in the movie? Is the Pink Floyd shirt okay because that scene was set in 1973? How can you even think that? Wouldn't it have been much better if he was wearing a T. Rex or Sweet or Slade or even an Alice Cooper T-shirt? Or do you think T. Rex and Alice Cooper got too much play in that *Dark Shadows* movie with Johnny Depp? How the hell can he like Pink Floyd? I have actually tried to like that first Pink Floyd album, *Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, and would you be surprised to find out I failed miserably at doing so? Doesn't that band just sound like a buncha bullshit to you? Like, what, exactly, are they supposed to sound like? A loud nap? I never got them, did you? However, can you forgive me for, during the Wisconsin gubernatorial recall election a few years back, changing my profile picture to a picture of Syd Barrett, with the caption "IVOTED FOR BARRETT," as Barrett was the opponent to arch-douche incumbent Scott Walker? But, seriously, why did it have to be a PINK FLOYD T-shirt he was wearing? What if I want to dress up as him for Halloween? Will I have to buy a Pink Floyd T-shirt? If I do so, should I write "I HATE" above "PINK FLOYD," in clever reference to the T-shirt Johnny Rotten is said to have worn the day he auditioned for the Sex Pistols? Or is that an unforgivable affront to the integrity of the costumery? And is it all right that "Time in a Bottle" by Jim Croce was the song playing during Quicksilver's bullet-time kitchen shenanigans? It was kind of funny, don't you think? Yet, wouldn't it have been cooler if the song that played was "Time Has Come Today" by the Chambers Brothers? Or would that just suck, because the Chambers Brothers wouldn't get any of

"Is playing a show without a set list punk?"

the money for it, and would have to continue living in poverty, whilst some heinous corporate types reaped vast zillions from their song's use? Did you know that seventy-three-year-old Lester Chambers got assaulted because he dedicated a song to Trayvon Martin? Some people, ya know? Why isn't there a Stan Lee cameo appearance in the new X-Men™ movie? Did you know I had my photo taken with Stan Lee this April? You do realize I'm talking about the Stan Lee from Marvel™ Comics, not the Stan Lee from the Dickies, right? Did you know i once got locked in a club with Stan Lee and the rest of our bandmates, because there was this huge fight outside the club at closing time and the bartender locked all the doors and told us no one was going anywhere until the cops got there to bust up the fight outside? Did you ever hear him tell the story about how Long Gone John of Sympathy For The Recording Industry came over to his house and started throwing hundred dollar bills on his bed until Stan agreed to part with the leather jacket with the leopard on it that Iggy Pop wore on the back of the *Raw Power* album, which Iggy had given to Stan as recompense for a drug debt? I think it would be funnier if he told it to you himself, don't you? It cost an arm and a leg to get my photo taken with Stan Lee, don't you hate that? He's ninety-one years old though, can you see your way clear to pardon my act of fiscal ridiculousness? He won't be shuffling along this mortal coil much longer, ya know? Don't you think that that would be a good career for me in my old age, becoming essentially a human photo shoot prop? Can't you see me traveling to geek conventions and charging people a boatload of dough to stand by me as I make goofy Nørb faces? It's gotta beat being a greeter at WalMart®, right? Then again, how can I turn down a gig with such great access to sacks of frozen French fries? I haven't seen that new Spider-Man movie, have you? Does Peter Parker wear any cool band T-shirts in this one? He was wearing a Ramones T-shirt in the last one, did you know that? Did you know that Peter Parker and the Ramones both hail from the Forest Hills neighborhood in Queens? Did you notice that the Ramones T-shirt Peter Parker was wearing in the movie was typographically correct, in that all the letters in "RAMONES" touched a little bit, except for the "N" and the "E"? Did you notice that many modern day Ramones T-shirts have none of the letters touching at



ALEX BARRETT

Did you notice that many modern day Ramones T-shirts have none of the letters touching at all, that they got the kerning wrong?

all, that they got the kerning wrong? Did you know that Ramones T-shirts with incorrect kerning are one of my pet peeves? How many times have I bitched about this? Why does this nightmare continue? Was it douchey that the first thing I ever said to my ex-girlfriend's son was that his Ramones T-shirt was wrong, because the letters weren't touching? What can ya do, ya know? I announced eight roller derby bouts over the course of two days, do you have any idea what that does to your brain? How the hell can I write a column? How the hell can I go to work? Should I call in sick? I haven't called in sick to work in over twenty years, don't you think I'm due? Did you know that I had over four hundred hours of sick leave built up when I got fired from my last major gig? Did you realize that

that is TEN WEEKS of sick leave I left unused? What the fuck was I thinking? What the fuck did showing up to work every day get me, anyway? A sack of frozen French fries and some gizmos that don't work, does that seem fair? Moving on, what would be funnier, Elmer Fudd covering "Lazy Sunday Afternoon" by the Small Faces, or Wayne County covering "I'm Not a Loser" by the Descendents? And furthermore, have you ever read *The Interrogative Mood* by Padgett Powell? Have you heard of it? Are you aware that it is a book that consists of nothing but questions? Do you think that it would be okay for someone to rip off that concept if they needed to get a column in at the last minute, and they'd spent all weekend announcing women's flat track roller derby

instead of writing? If not, what would be a better idea? Would planet earth be happier with yet another column on how to pick up women at the record store? Did anyone try any of those lines? Did they work? Has anyone ever had sex to the *William Tell Overture*? Was it rad? Did you have to hit repeat on your CD player while you were doing it, in order to consummate the act during the correct song? I did that once with a turntable and the *Pink Panther* theme, is that too much information? WHAT THE FUCK AM I GOING TO WRITE ABOUT???

Love?
-Norb???

BITE THE CACTUS

THOUGHTS ON MONOCULTURE

FROM MICHAEL POLLAN'S
"THE BOTANY OF DESIRE"

ADRIAN CHI

AND SOME OF THE MOST HELPFUL
ANIMALS — ARE HUMANS.



THE FEW SPECIES WE PREFER
ARE SUPER-MASS-PRODUCED

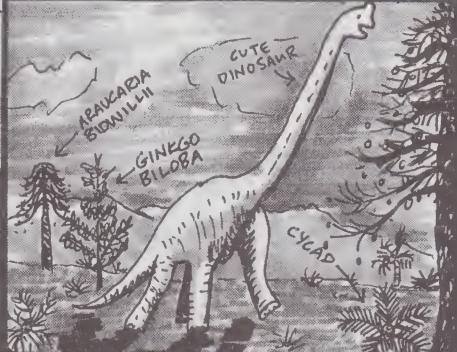


WHICH MAKES THEM SUPER
VULNERABLE TO PESTS.

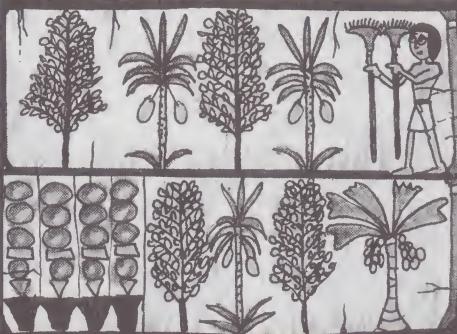
MONSANTO EVEN CREATED A
"NEW LEAF" VARIETY THAT MAKES
A PESTICIDE INSIDE ITSELF...



PLANTS HAVE BEEN EVOLVING FOR
HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF YEARS.



FOR AS LONG AS WE'VE BEEN GROWING
FOOD, OUR PREFERENCES HAVE
AFFECTED ITS EVOLUTION.



THEY ALL SHARE THE EXACT SAME
DELICIOUS QUALITIES, BUT
THE SAME WEAKNESSES TOO.

PHYTOPHTHORA INFESTANS
AKA "BLIGHT"
WIPED OUT
IRELAND'S
A SINGLE
VARIETY
OF POTATO
"THE IRISH"
WHICH THEY
DEPENDED
ON FOR FOOD.
THIS INITIATED
THE GREAT FAMINE
LASTING FROM 1845-1852, CLAIMING ONE
MILLION LIVES, REDUCING THE COUNTRY'S
POPULATION BY 25%, AND CHANGING HISTORY.

BUT THESE FIXES ARE TEMPORARY.
BUGS DEVELOP RESISTANCES.



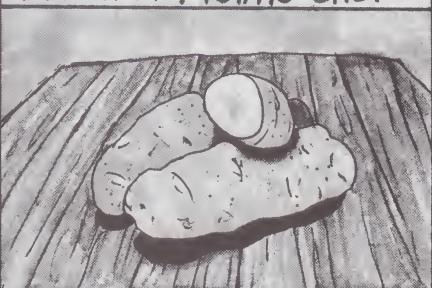
THEY'VE FIGURED OUT HOW TO
GET INSECTS AND ANIMALS TO
HELP THEM REPRODUCE.



MOST OF THE PRODUCE FOUND IN
BIG GROCERY STORES NOW,
USED TO LOOK A LOT DIFFERENT.



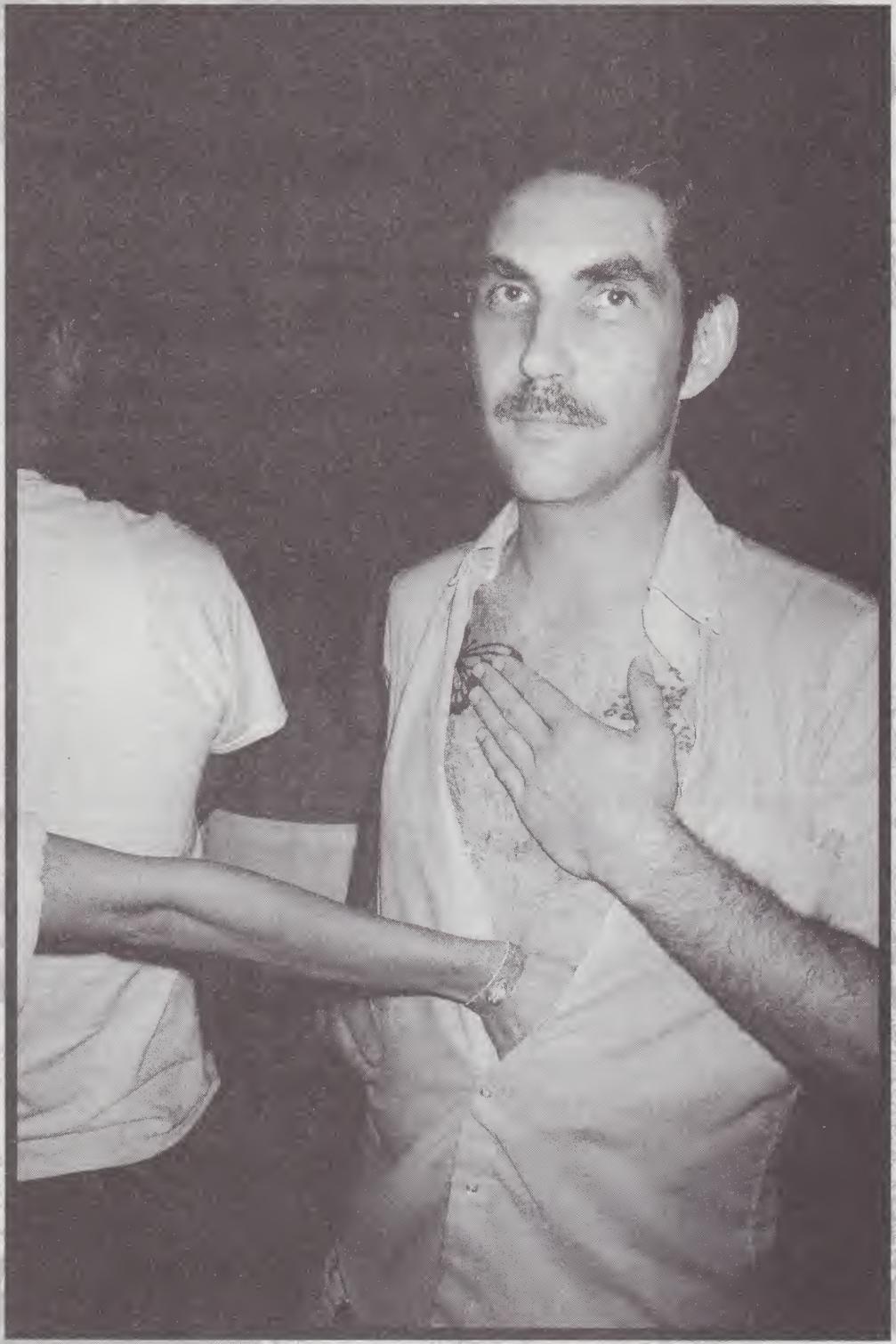
THE "RUSSET BURBANK" IS OUR
FRENCH-FRY POTATO CROP



THEY'RE SPRAYED WITH PESTICIDES TO
CONTROL THE COLORADO POTATO BEETLE

THE BEST THING WE CAN DO NOW IS
GROW, AND CONSUME MORE VARIETY,
AND REALIZE THAT WE ARE PART
OF NATURE. WE TEND TO FORGET THAT.





Dan Monick's Photo Page
Arlie John Carstens, Los Angeles, 5/17/14

THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

RHYTHM CHICKEN

“Never try to predict your own future.”

Weird Little Life

Never try to predict your own future. That's what I've learned so far. Every now and then I try to envision what my life will be about ten years from now. I used to always think that life would most likely quiet down as I got older. More and more over the years I realize that the reality of my life is almost the opposite. Things don't quiet down at all. In some ways they just get more surreal, or at the very least, more weird and unexpected. So I ask myself what my life will be about ten years from now, and for the first time I can finally admit to myself that I have no freakin' clue.

When I was an eight-year-old, I had a pretty clear vision of what my adult life would be like. I was pretty certain that by the age of eighteen I would finish high school and become a professional trout fishing guide. I would host a trout fishing television show, start my own line of fishing lures, win many national fishing tournaments, and make celebrity appearances at fishing trade shows. I would own a log cabin on the Peshtigo River and live off fresh-caught trout into my old age. At the age of eight, nothing else even remotely entered my plans for the future.

By the age of eighteen, my fishing equipment had already collected years of dust. My hands no longer held a rod and reel, but a pair of drumsticks and various guitars. I had discovered punk rock. Soon after that discovery, it wasn't long until I was making punk rock. Instead of listening to the local top forty station or my older brothers' cassette tapes of Yes or Kansas, I was listening to the Replacements, Dead Kennedys, Dickies, and a good dose of all the local bands I could find. I did indeed finish high school, but fishing was no longer in my future plans. I was part of something that seemed so much more important and exciting.

At eighteen, I tried to predict where I'd be in another ten years. I was going into my first year of college and I already knew I was studying math. Even though I loved the punk rock more than life itself, I figured I would probably finish college in four years and finally become an adult. I would get the high-paying office job (most likely an actuary for some profitable insurance company). I would get the house, the wife, the kids, the dog, the retirement plan, the weekends off, the yearly vacation, and then I would have crossed the divide. I would be an adult with childhood, adolescence, and punk rock long behind me. By the age of

twenty-eight I would undoubtedly be settled down, financially secure, and all grown up—in other words, boring.

Can you see where this is going yet?

Well, I somehow managed to live to the age of twenty-eight. Was I grown up? Physically, yeah I guess so. Mentally? HELLLLLL NO. Did I want to be grown up? HELLLLLL NO. Heck, I was finally finishing up my bachelor's degree. I had taken many semesters off to do bizarre things that made my parents scratch their heads. First, I took a long bike trip through the south just as I turned twenty-one. Then, I was finally playing in a punk rock band that was playing outside of Green Bay, then outside of Wisconsin, outside of the Midwest, and finally outside of the country. My summers were spent flipping burgers up in Door County. During the school year I was working the local record store for minimum wage. I turned twenty-eight with my newly earned math degree. I framed my diploma in a Jesse "The Body" Ventura vinyl picture disc and it soon collected dust alongside my fishing equipment.

Again, I thought, "Uh, where will I be in ten years?" This is when my predictions for the future started to blur a bit. Maybe I'd find other bands to play in and keep on touring, punk rocking, and traveling. Maybe I'd open my own record store. Maybe I'd start my own little business in Door County. Maybe I'd... oh heck, I would probably just get that teacher certification and start teaching math or finally accept one of those actuary positions and perform regression analysis with probability theory for the rest of my life. It might be later than expected, but I'd finally be the mathematician with the white shirt and tie in some office. I might still listen to the Clash and Toy Dolls from time to time, but I'd be an efficient little cog in the big machine.

Let's fast forward another ten years and I'm thirty-eight years old. In those last ten years I had quit the punk rock bands altogether and moved up north to live in a woodshed behind my friend's trailer. I flipped burgers for a year before I started playing my crappy drumset in random public places while wearing a chicken head. I missed school and started studying the Polish language in Milwaukee. I started writing for this punk rock magazine and then moved to Poland.

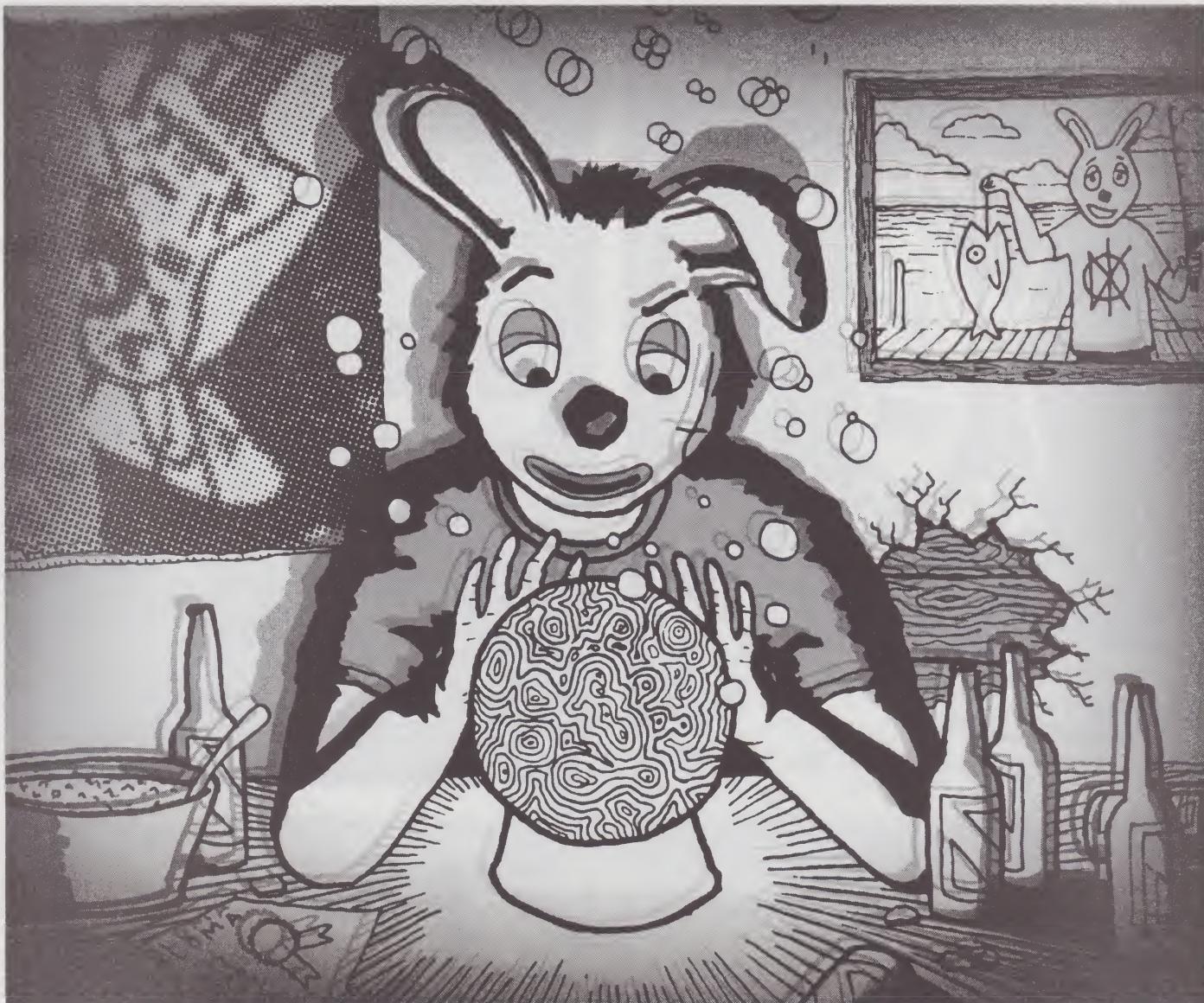
After a year there I moved back to my woodshed in northern Wisconsin. After a year

there I moved back to Krakow, Poland. One year later I was back in northern Wisconsin, but had moved out of the woodshed and INTO THE TRAILER! Luxury living at last! Before long I had started spending winters in Las Vegas. I'm still not sure why, but it did seem like the exact opposite of Krakow, Poland. After my second and final winter in the Vegas area, I had just turned thirty-eight and was again living in a run-down trailer on ten acres of wooded property near Lake Michigan, still flipping burgers for the man.

So, there I was, thirty-eight years old. Was I grown up? Was I a success on any level? The eight-year-old me might've been appalled at the thirty-eight-year-old me. The eighteen-year-old me might've been genuinely shocked and scared of the thirty-eight-year-old me. The twenty-eight-year-old me would've been pleasantly surprised by the thirty-eight-year-old me. Meanwhile, the thirty-eight-year-old me looked at himself and asked, "Uh, maybe it's time to grow up?" I knew that might never happen, but it wouldn't hurt to try. Besides, at this age, *growing up* had a different meaning. I didn't have to change and become a boring obedient member of society, I just had to start fulfilling my younger predictions for my future. It was time to start the shop in Door County.

Within two years I had finally purchased my first real estate, a shop no bigger than a two-stall garage. I was officially in debt, like a lot of debt. That didn't feel so great, and I still didn't feel grown up. I started my soup-diner business and became my own boss, which is the most fulfilling grown-up feeling I've ever had. Now I run a small Polish-themed soup shop in a tiny village full of retired millionaires, yet I live illegally in the attic like a troll and spin plenty of punk rock on the shop stereo every chance I get. I throw a yearly punk rock show in the kitchen. I still listen to *Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables* and *Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take out the Trash*. Those albums amaze me even more today.

Today, I am forty-three years old. Have I settled down? Well, fifteen months ago I was ticketed by the railroad police for playing a drumset on top of a train engine in Los Angeles. Two weeks ago I was ticketed by island police for drunken hitchhiking on Washington Island. Today, I had a very well-respected local man, a retired professor and published biologist, tell me that my business and I are the most positive addition to the



ERIC BASKAUSKAS

I framed my diploma in a Jesse "The Body" Ventura vinyl picture disc.

community he's ever seen. While he told me this, I was playing *Tenement* over the shop stereo and wearing my favorite Devo shirt.

Okay, so this column has turned out to be some sort of decade-by-decade timeline, a retrospective thus far of my weird little life. I guess the main points are to not try to predict your own future and to expect the unexpected. Where will I be in five years when I turn forty-eight? Good lord, I have no freakin' clue. The unexpected would be me in a white shirt and tie, sitting in some stale office.

The comical truth is that I'm starting to work on that eight-year-old dream. I've been fishing a bit more lately.

And as for the punk rock...

Dinghole Report #143: Lordy, Lordy, Look Who's Forty! Ruckus for Ric Six! (Rhythm Chicken sighting... er, hearing... #681)

So my ol' buddy Ric Six was turning forty! Unfortunately, Ric lives in New Jersey while I'm stuck in northern Wisconsin, so it was time for the Chicken to return to the phone lines to bring the birthday ruckus. I closed up my soup shop and hauled the drums in from my car. I set them up in the dining room and called his cell number. This

was the first cell-to-cell ruckus in Chicken history, for whatever that's worth. Anyway, Ric answered, "Hello!" I then set my phone down and played a riotous few minutes of sheerly chaotic birthday beats! The cell-to-cell audio quality was impeccable! Ric's forty-year-old ear was shredded by my Wisconsin northwoods thunder! I pounded out the final bludgeoning beats, raised my wings for a few seconds, then hung up.

Punk rock.

—Rhythm Chicken



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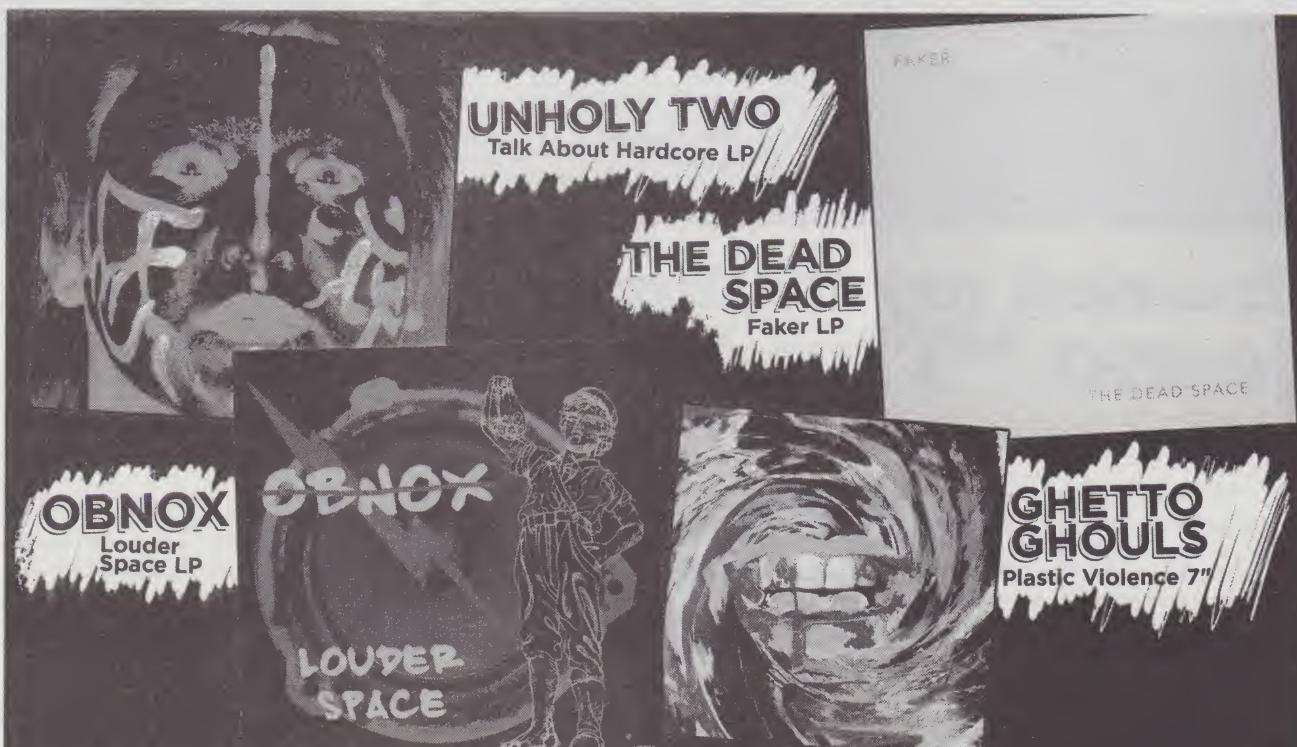
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ART, I'VE
COME TO
REALIZE..

NO MATTER HOW
MANY GALLERY
SHOWS YOU DO, OR
HOW MUCH YOU
SELL..

..BEING A "WORKING"
ARTIST IS HARD WORK!



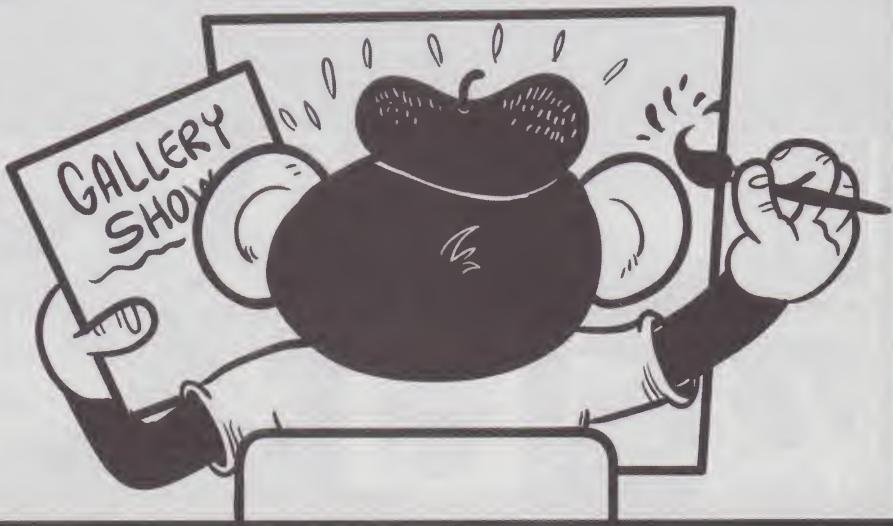
IT'S NOT THAT I THOUGHT IT WOULD
BE EASY, BUT IT DOES TAKE SOME
DETERMINATION..YOU GOTTA KEEP
YOURSELF OUT THERE.



IT WAS ONLY RECENTLY THAT I
FINALLY HAD SOME BUSINESS
CARDS MADE.



MY PLAN HAS BEEN TO
JUST PRODUCE ART ALL
OF THE TIME, GET IN
AS MANY SHOWS AS
POSSIBLE, AND GET MY
STUFF OUT THERE FOR
EVERYONE TO SEE. THE
BEST THING THAT I'VE
COME TO REALIZE
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WHETHER I GET PAID OR
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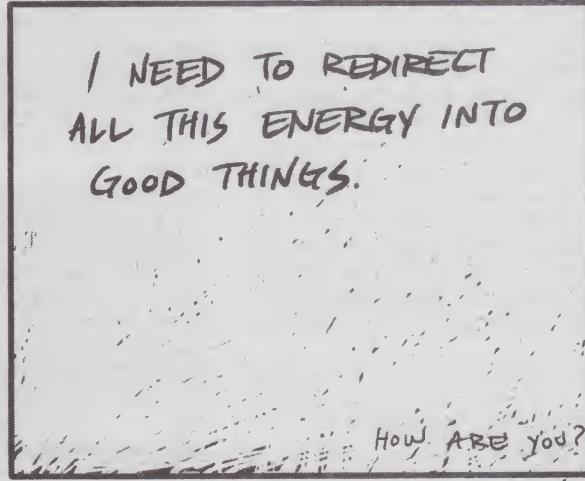
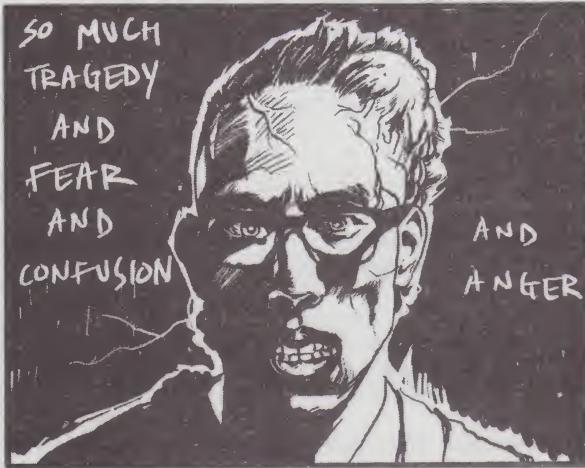


LUCKY

WONTON NOT NOW

SELFIE

BY LUCY NAKAZAWA



KN 6/14

RAZORCAKE 25

WHO ARE YOU?

“As long as I love me, I am happy.”

Nardwuar vs. Bushwick Bill

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Bushwick Bill: My mother's child [laughs].

Nardwuar: You are Bushwick Bill.

Bushwick Bill: Yeah, I'm Bushwick Bill, how you doing? [laughs]

Nardwuar: Bushwick Bill, welcome to, Austin, Texas, where you do not live.

Bushwick Bill: No, I do not live here. But it is where music lives, so I guess technically I am living here.

Nardwuar: Bushwick Bill, you started as a dancer in New York, at the Swatch Watch competition?

Bushwick Bill: Yes. I am a break dancing genius. [Laughs]. Actually, when I was younger, I was into graffiti, break dancing, and DJing, and then later on found out I could rap. But I am part of the five elements of hip-hop, as far as break dancing, producing, DJing, and writing graffiti. Yeah, it's all the same.

Nardwuar: What were the dances? The Jerry Lewis, the Pee-wee Herman, the Smurf.

Bushwick Bill: Yeah, those were all of the dances right there, including the original moves that we would make up during break dancing, you know what I mean? Like the head spin into the windmill. It's just, now that I am older, I feel all those pains in my joints. [laughs]

Nardwuar: The early days of Bushwick Bill, you worked at the Rhinestone Wrangler. What was the Rhinestone Wrangler?

Bushwick Bill: [Laughs] Well, first it was the Rhinestone Wrangler, then it was the Thunderdome, but I was a busboy with DJ—rest in peace—Lonnie Mack. The biggest act back then was Captain Jack and DJ Lonnie Mack, and Lonnie Mack got me a job there. I was a busboy. And every time I would finish cleaning up the glasses and stuff around the club that people were finished with, they would put on any beats from New York, and I would get out there and start lockin' and poppin' and doing the Smurf and the Jerry Lewis and the Pee-wee Herman and you name it.

Nardwuar: Bushwick Bill, is it true you are one of the only people in the entire world, if not the only person, to have a birth certificate and a death certificate?

Bushwick Bill: Yeah, when I lost my high. I died on June 19, 1991 at approximately 4:35,

and I didn't come to until in the morgue after seven o'clock. They were actually getting me ready for autopsy. That's at Ben Taub Hospital, Houston. They could tell you the whole thing. I was DOA on arrival.

Nardwuar: And then you woke up in the morgue and then took a piss on a cop?

Bushwick Bill: Yes. I had to pee so bad I pulled out the catheter and I jumped down and the cop just stood there and I just peed. Then I realized what I was doing—because you have got to remember, I didn't know I was dead—you know what I mean? Then of course he ran out of the room and the technician ran out of the room, from the morgue. It was a serious moment.

Nardwuar: And when they said you were dead, you really were dead? Like you had a toe tag on, too?

Bushwick Bill: I had the toe tag on. I was in the morgue, dead. [laughs] They didn't have me in the hallway. They didn't have me inside of a room waiting to transfer me. I was actually on the cold slab, getting ready to be pushed in.

Nardwuar: And then how much later did this LP cover happen? [Nardwuar hands an LP to Bill]

Bushwick Bill: On the day before my surgery to remove the eye.

Nardwuar: And you had no idea this was going to happen? People just showed up with cameras?

Bushwick Bill: They just—the hospital had me drugged up—so I was being prepared for a surgery. I couldn't eat, I couldn't drink anything, they had me on a bunch of medicine, and I didn't see the album cover until after it hit the shelves. But I mean, such is life.

Nardwuar: Bushwick Bill, Willie D heard you doing “Rebel without a Pause.” That's how you ended up in the Geto Boys?

Bushwick Bill: I don't know who is giving you your information, but it is so [pauses] weird. Okay, this is what happened. I was hanging out with DJ Ready Red. I didn't know Willie D. I knew Scarface. I knew Little J, 'cause I hung out with him a lot—and we went over the bible many times on different subject matters—and I am hanging out with Ready Red. The person who actually heard me rapping “Rebel Without a Pause” was John

Beado. He is the one that told Little J that, “Let's see if Little Bill could rap something.” And that is where the whole thing started from. Willie D had nothing to do with the influence of me rapping whatsoever.

Nardwuar: Dr. Dre, “Stranded on Death Row,” he got you to do that amazing intro. What do you remember about that amazing intro for *The Chronic*?

Bushwick Bill: Ummm, I remember Warren G and Snoop inviting me to the studio, and Dr. Dre is in there with one of the guys from a rap group called Po' Broke & Lonely, and I heard the theme to “Stranded on Death Row,” which reminded me of *Dark Shadows*, an old radio TV show, and I asked him if I could say something, and he said, “No, because I have to finish this album mix.” And I was like, “Come on, just let me say something, and if it doesn't work, then cool.” I kept bothering him until he let me say it, then he said, “Can you do that again?” That is how I got on it.

Nardwuar: Bushwick Bill, the song “Size Ain't...”

Bushwick Bill: ...Shit, yeah.

Nardwuar: You talk about, quote, “shit, a dick, and a cigarette.”

Bushwick Bill: Yes, I said “I would punk you out and make you be my bitch / Let a nig get shit on his dick for a cigarette.” I was talking in jail terms because that is what people do in jails. So I was like, if you are going to write a song, and you have to write it in a way that the people who have been to jail know it, and the ones who haven't been there can ask the question and find out. So that was just a song written about what can go on in jail. Because if you saw the movie *Scared Straight*—I am talking about the original *Scared Straight*—you remember how they were talking to those kids and telling them what they would make them do if they came in there. That is where a lot of the ideas for the song came from.

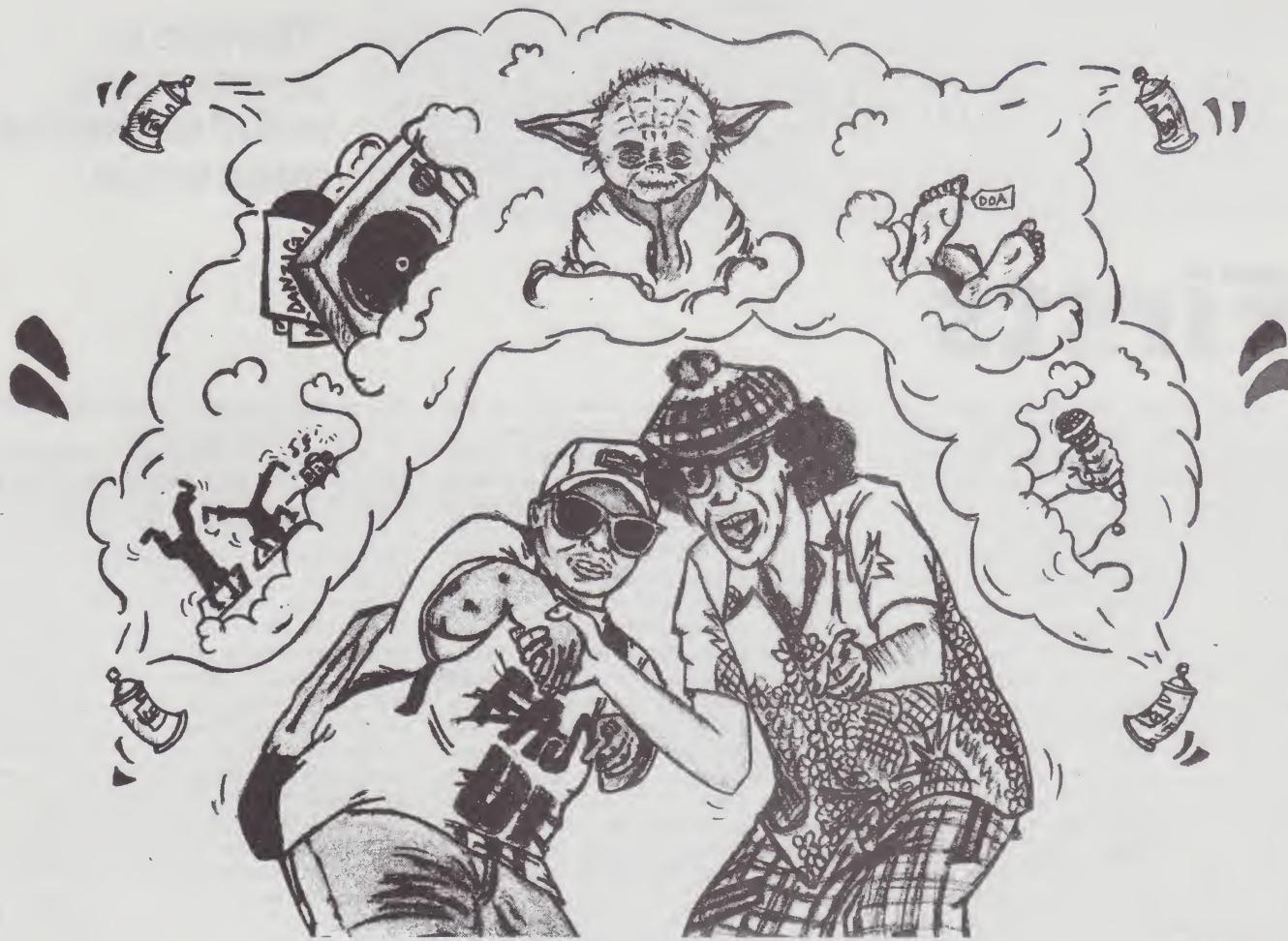
Nardwuar: Bushwick Bill, are there many songs written about you, or titled Bushwick Bill?

Bushwick Bill: Not that I know of, no.

Nardwuar: There is one by Wesley Willis called “Bushwick Bill.”

Bushwick Bill: There is? I didn't know that.

Nardwuar: There is indeed. He has passed away, but these are some of the lyrics. Wesley Willis's “Bushwick Bill.” [Nardwuar recites



GENESIS BAUTISTA

I had the toe tag on. I was in the morgue, dead. [laughs] It was a serious moment.

lyrics] "You are a gangster rapper / You are a gangster rap artist / You can really knock it out / You can really whoop a camel's ass."

Bushwick Bill: Wowser, that is tight. Pretty cool. Um, I did hear that the artist from Sublime, the one that passed away, that he mentioned me on one of his albums. He sampled a Chuckie song. I just don't know which album it was. I have been trying to find it and listen to it. But that is the only thing I have ever heard of, and Ice T on the *Power* album, "Ladies, we're not just talking about you / Because some of you niggas are bitches too." He sampled that from "Size Ain't Shit." That's like the only two things I know, and now the new one that you just told me.

Nardwuar: Bushwick Bill, back to punk for a second. You like Danzig? What other punk stuff do you like?

Bushwick Bill: Yeah, Danzig is cool. We was on the same label with Rick Rubin. Yeah, he is pretty cool. I like Anthrax, too. And I like Twisted Sister. And what's his name, the one

that did Sid and Nancy, Sid Vicious. I like Sid Vicious and I like Billy Idol. I like a lot of music, man.

Nardwuar: Bushwick Bill, you are wearing a backpack right now, and I also saw you wearing a Yoda backpack. That was incredible. What is the Yoda backpack you have?

Bushwick Bill: Well I decided to put the Chuckie down, because if you look at the whole Chuckie mentality, even when he gets a chance to come back, he doesn't seem to quite get it right, you know what I am saying? And then Yoda is more like, "Underestimate my size, do you?" You know, he is more about the wisdom. He is more about rolling with the Force of being better. That is what being a Jedi is, living above the lie. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Where did you get your Yoda backpack?

Bushwick Bill: I actually got it out here at South By Southwest last year.

Nardwuar: Bushwick Bill, why should people care about Bushwick Bill?

Bushwick Bill: They don't have to. As long as I love me, I am happy. Because if I really was worried about what people thought about me, my arms are short, you know what I mean? I am short, I am not average height. I can't reach everything everybody else can reach. If I would have believed the things that people told me when I was younger, I wouldn't even think I could accomplish half the things I have accomplished, so they don't really have to like me. What they need to do is love themselves, because I love me, and like me, and I am happy with me all by my damn self.

Nardwuar: Well thanks very much Bushwick Bill. Keep on rockin' in the free world, and doot doola doot doo...

Bushwick Bill: Doot doo.

Nardwuar: Yeah.

Bushwick Bill: [laughs] Out of control. That guy is out of control.

To hear and see this interview,
hop to nardwuar.com

I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

"There are no memories being made if the discovery ceases to exist."

Firsts

Back in January 1977, within a few days of my seventh birthday, I received a card in the mail from my grandmother in Seattle. A five-spot was tucked inside. At this time, I was already monkeying around with my folks' records that filled the bottom shelf of the linen closet in the hallway of our house. I was becoming increasingly interested about the traveling rock'n'roll circus known as KISS. A good handful of my neighborhood pals and their older siblings had their KISS records on heavy rotation while I played over at their houses. You can pretty much imagine exactly what that birthday card money was going towards as soon as I discovered it. The Magic Mushroom was a head shop located inside the big indoor mall. I remembered seeing a long crate of albums sitting on the glass counter every time we walked by there. After telling my ma exactly what I wanted to do with that fiver, we headed down to the mall a few days later so's I could make my first official music purchase: KISS's *Rock and Roll Over*, which had been released the previous year.

I always find it interesting to talk with different people to see what their first piece of vinyl (or whatever medium it may be) was. Some remember exactly which beloved record or single they picked up for the first time. Some remember simply listening to whatever music was playing in their house at that time, which often was a bit of a drag, and it totally depended on what kind of music the older people in their house listened to. That first record I bought not only validated the KISS feeding frenzy going on in my head at the time as a kid, but it forever left a permanent, teeny-tiny window on the side of my brain that gets pushed open and filled with vivid images of that exact timeframe of the past every time I hear any track off of *Rock and Roll Over*. Now, don't get crazy—this isn't intended to be some wacky KISS diatribe (although I remain a steadfast fan of their 1974-78 era). I'm simply noting a particular example of how vivid a memory can be cauterized into the human mind from something so wonderfully simple as a record or song.

Going back even a few years earlier, one song that was dominating rock stations in the summer of 1974 was "Jet" by Paul McCartney And Wings. Again, I don't really care about your personal opinion of

the song, although my wife Yvonne and pal Michelle McCracken would likely put a boot in your eye for speaking ill of Sir Paul, but what's weird is how that song rattles my senses around in the oddest of ways. I can clearly see my fat, four-year-old buzz-cut-head wandering around the front yard with a homemade cherry Kool-Aid popsicle in hand, dripping it all over the yellowish, summer-scorched grass on our front yard while that song was crackling out of a portable radio set up in our garage. Shit, I can almost feel that god-awful L.A. smog aching slightly in my chest with each deep inhalation just talking about this here. It's as if there's some sensory throw switch that music snaps on with people when a certain song or record plays, the same way a programmed assassin gets their kill on when their triggering word or phrase is spoken to them.

Fast forward to the '80s: punk rock started getting into the mix and rearing its crazy-insane, oh-so-much-fun head. Every single time I hear that *Peace Thru Vandalism* EP by The Vandals, visions are brought into focus of all-day parties going on at my high school pal Nick's house (yes, the same loon I spoke of in issue #76) that often ended up with a grip of people scattered across his carpeted den passed out and pukey, all the while Nick was in the kitchen grilling steaks, pointing and laughing like a maniac at the less-fortunate victims of that afternoon's alcohololiday. The best was when he'd cup his hands around some beer-foaming-at-the-mouth poor bastard's ear that had the spins and started barking the chorus to "Anarchy Burger (Hold the Government)" as loud as he could. God damn, that shit was funny.

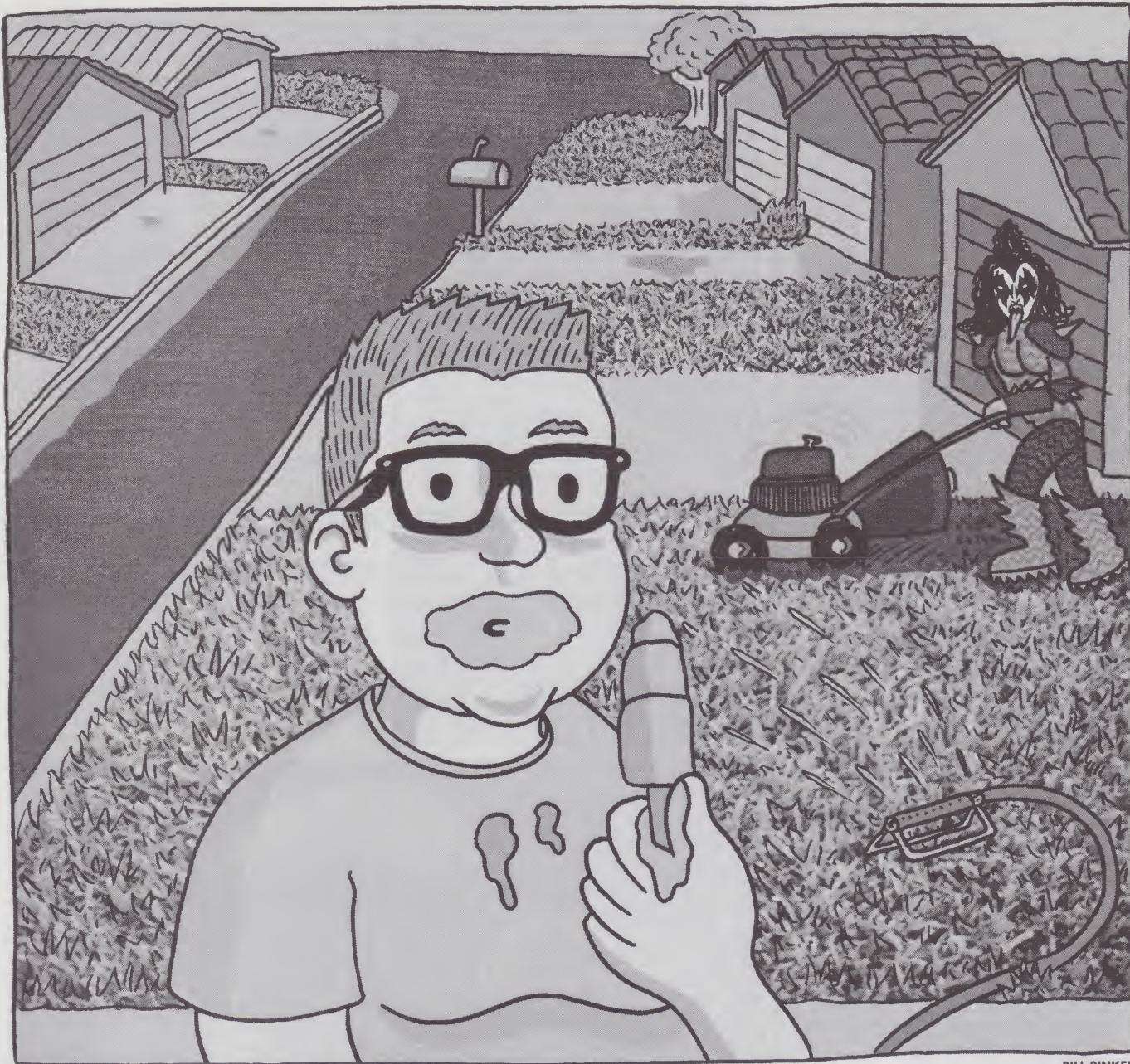
With every play of Agent Orange's *Living in Darkness* full length, I can literally smell the paint thinner/turpentine and sawdust in the garages of some of the people I first started playing music with in high school. (Not intentional smelling or huffing, mind you, although a few questionable cats I sat in with came across as they were indeed getting their huff (and whatnot) on.) Anytime I hear "Too Young to Die" from that record, I immediately picture myself sitting shotgun to one of my oldest friends Aggie (RIP), with him belting out the lyrics to me and anyone else out on the road he could get attention from. He used to play the shit out of that record, the same way I'd constantly

have my first Ramones purchases incessantly spinning, which brings me to....

Ah, yes, the Ramones. I remember my older sister Julie already owning both *Leave Home* and *End of the Century* before I even started seriously listening to, and soon buying, my own Ramones rekkids. Those two albums started a chain reaction of me going to record shops and grabbing everything from their debut forward in chronological order, as I didn't wanna miss a thing along the way of my discovering 'em for the first time. Like a hell of a lot of other musicians who were serious about doling out the punk rock, Ramones albums played a big part of my early years of serious drum wailing. They helped me get that consistency of a tempo dialed in, not to mention the endurance it eventually instilled in me after playing along to those albums for hours. Soon I was throwing down with other friends who could knock out their tunes on bass and guitar. Then I had my mind turned backwards upside-down after I saw 'em for the first time at the Hollywood Palladium. All distinct memories related with their catalog are one hundred percent golden.

Anyone who knows me well enough knows that I'm a true-believing motherfucker when it comes to Pegboy, especially their *Strong Reaction* LP. I feel rather honored that I got to catch their very first show in the L.A. area at the now-defunct Bogart's in Long Beach soon after that record came out. I went down with a buddy of mine to a less-than-packed bar to see what is still one of my favorite shows to date, complete with my pal trying to jump on top of the crowd, to which they parted like the Red Sea (homeboy was much too heavy). As soon as any track comes on from *Strong Reaction* or their *Three-Chord Monte* EP, my mind zips back to that exact night of being front and center with fists in the air, sweating and screaming along to every song while the band ripped through the set like it was gonna be their last.

When I finally caught Big Drill Car live after listening to their *Small Block* EP and the (then) new *Album Type Thing* for a little bit, I was floored with just how fucking awesome they were live. I mean, that band wasn't just a band that had their shit together; they were a machine that brought just as much to the stage as



BILL PINKEL

It's as if there's some sensory throw switch that music snaps on with people when a certain song or record plays.

they did in the recording studio. With every spin of those first two releases, I remember one of the first times I caught them out at Club Lingerie in Hollywood, rocking the bricks loose from those walls. I also recall fun-filled evenings listening to those first two releases in Martin McMartin's (my old *Flipside* cohort) pimpmobile, driving to and from shows with those songs pounding out of his

speakers, with Marty poking me in the chest while accentuating the song lyrics. Those times were muy excelente.

I could literally go on for hours with this, but, more importantly, I'd like to hear some of what y'all can particularly remember with some of your music purchase firsts. Get back at me if you feel like sharing some, especially the funny. I do love me some funny.

There are no memories being made if the discovery ceases to exist.

It's out there, keep looking—discovering is half the fun.

—Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com



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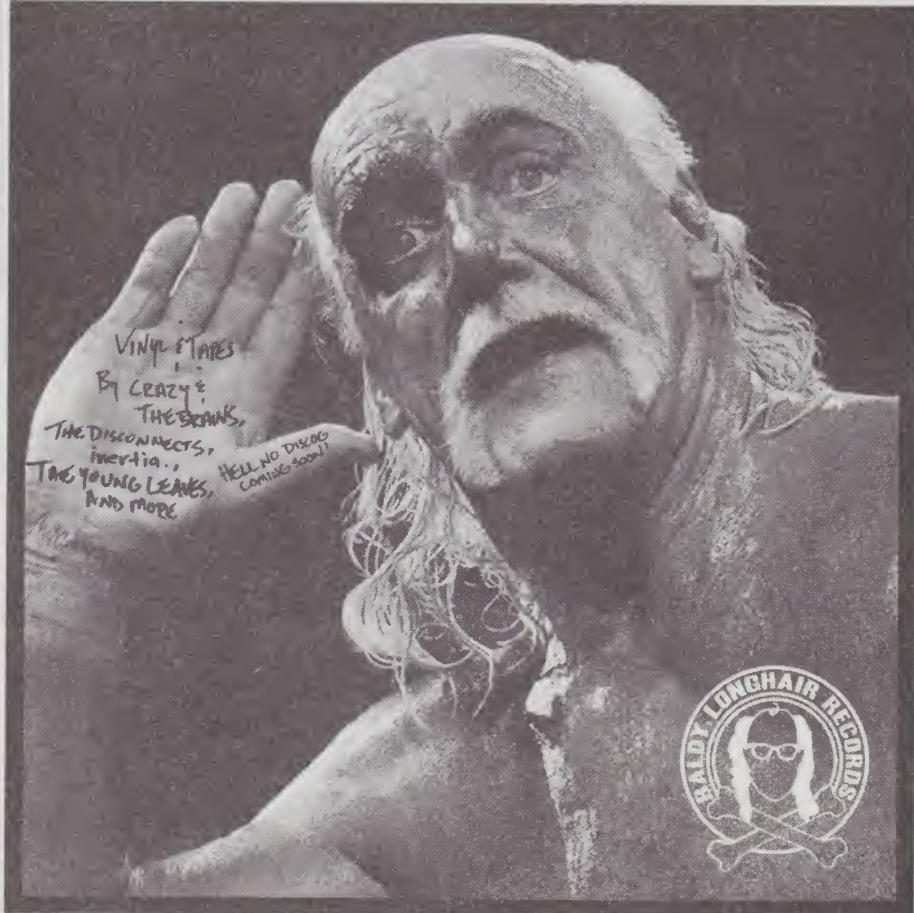
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Rachel Framingheddu's Photo Page

Rome, Italy (above) medical book from 1724 (below) Malva and a street condom dispensary.

9/11

NEVER LET ME
FORGET

BY
DONNA
RAMONE

ILLUSTRATIONS
BY
STEVE THUESON
LAYOUT
BY
TODD TAYLOR

Few things can make me as angry as when a stranger grabs my cooch.

I made the short flight from Salt Lake City to Ontario, California earlier this year to see my friends and family. I emailed my itinerary to my airport ride. She wrote back, after reading through the small print, "Does that really say September 11 Security Fee? That's fucked." After my quick vacation, I got a ride back to the airport and took my place in the massive security line. It took almost an hour to get to the front, and if I didn't hurry I was going to be last on the plane. I disrobed. I took off my shoes and jacket as I was commanded to do and assumed the disco position for the radiation tube to get a good naked look at me. I jumped out, ready to grab my bag and bolt when I heard the very stern, and very familiar, "Miss, could you step aside."

My last name gives away the fact that I am Middle Eastern. (The byline lied. My last name isn't Ramone. It's Baluchi, as in Baluchistan) Unfortunately, so does my face, and probably my thighs. Getting taken aside or getting an extra pat-down is just part of my airport experience and has been since I was a teenager. At 5'3" and 130 lbs., I'm easily the greatest threat any airport has ever known. Usually, I roll my eyes, let them hear one of my annoying Californian "totally's, and after a full leg and back rub, I'm let go. Usually.

"Hold out your hands, palms up." This is a new security measure I'm already accustomed to. A little cotton pad is held in what looks like a big, black plastic shoehorn. They rubbed the cotton across my hands. Then the cotton pad was dropped in a machine which tested to see if there is any explosive material residue. That's right, friends, I regularly have my hands tested for explosives. I was dead-eyed and irritated, waiting for this idiocy to be over so I could catch my plane. I glanced over at the screen and looked for the green "OKAY" to flash and for someone to give me the, "You may go." Instead, I saw something I was not ready for. It flashed red with the word "ALARM," and—would you believe it—an alarm sounded.

Two women grabbed me, took away all my stuff, in particular my phone, and put me in a frosted-glass holding cell. In their eyes, I was already a criminal. They barked orders at me while they pulled out all of my unmentionables looking for my explosives, I guess.

"Are these all of your things?"

"Where are you flying to?"

"Do you understand what we're asking you?"

I was swallowing my anger but I suddenly spit some up. "You're going to make me miss my flight." I probably sounded like I was growling.

She asked what time my flight was and then told me I had "plenty of time." Knowing that was a complete lie, I took the words as a threat and shut up. Then in a very bored tone, one woman read me the procedure about to happen while the other made me stand up and started to perform said procedure. All it consisted of was touching the surface of my entire body. As I felt this stranger take solid hold of my crotch, I couldn't help but think, "I really fucking hate 9/11."

In a surprising twist, I didn't have any explosives. In front of the TSA women, I had the pleasure of packing the stuff they had carelessly tossed out of my bag and did my best to walk out with my head held high. No one ever says "Please," "Thank you," or "I'm sorry" in the TSA. They don't have to, nor do they think they owe you one.

As I walked out, I heard one woman turn to the other and point out that the clock—the one she referenced when I asked about my flight—was wrong. I absolutely missed my flight. As I sat there waiting for another scheduled flight to get me home, I was left with my seething anger and thoughts. So, being an adult, I muttered, "Fuck you, 9/11. I fucking hate you so goddamn much."

Born in the USA?

This didn't start in the Fall of 2001, though, as much as I wish it had. As a kid, I eventually learned I was not lumped in with the so-called "good guys." I remember seeing Popeye cartoons from the '40s, where he fights some fat, bearded Arab men living in a tent in the desert and thinking, "The bad guy looks just like my uncle." I'm just one of many ethnicities that unfortunately got thrown in the

"not good" pile by the melting pot of America. Being a child, I never really understood what that could mean for me, though. I had already separated bad guys from their ethnicity or the religion they practiced, and had never thought to mix the two. Turns out, my tiny child brain was a lot more progressive than some of my peers.

The moment I personally felt like things were amiss came in 1990, when The Gulf War began. I'm not sure how many of you really remember that short-lived bullshit, but I do. I remember it better than anything else that decade. I remember it because I had just turned seven and that was the first time anyone had ever looked me in the eyes and said, "Go back to your country." I'll never forget the look on the face of the little Aryan prince who said it, either. I was stunned and confused, but you better believe I held back any tears and shouted, "This is my country, Buttface!"

I was born in Los Angeles County, but my parents were born and moved here from a tiny island of paradise, Bahrain. Up until this point, I had never fully found myself stereotyped as anything other than a little girl. Being a little girl, it felt justified and I never found myself upset or misrepresented. For all I knew, everyone traveled to see their extended family and spoke other languages. My entire extended family still resides on that little perfect teardrop in the Persian Gulf (or Arabian Gulf, which is a whole debate I'm not about to get into but you're welcome to look it up yourself). Back then, I visited my family almost every summer for the entire three months. If someone else paid for it and work had summer breaks, I would still be going now. It was my other home. So, could someone please explain to the long-haired seven-year-old with the big nose why the U.S. military was threatening to drop a bomb on her grandma?

That same year my aunts sent a photo of themselves in their colored bathrobes, wearing gas masks. The masks were simply precautionary and the photo was supposed to be funny; my parents sure thought so. It completely terrified me, I stayed awake, night after night, wondering what was going to happen if they did need those masks. I was convinced the military would kill them using the Joker's Laughing Gas (*Batman* had come out the year before and I was seven, okay?).

What was even worse was how much the news and my neighbors were all for this war. They thought it was awesome and made Saddam Hussein jokes where the punch line was his death. If what they said was true, then why did my grandmother think he was a great leader? And why did my uncle, the Bahraini diplomat in Iraq, get a photo taken with him? I was young and didn't understand foreign policy or political conflict. I thought World War III was happening and my entire family was going to get wiped out by one well-placed atom bomb, just like what I had learned happened in Japan.

Honestly, I still think there is nothing conceivably worse than war.

Somewhere in here, public opinion solidified that Arabs or Muslims (or in my case, a deadly combination of both) were *all* bomb-wielding villains. In high school, I got teased about it here and there, but I was too busy getting made fun of for being goth for them to assume I was anything other than Mexican. In college, I attacked a guy who made a similar assumption and said, "You have to admit, the world would be a better place if we just paved over the Middle East." My friends dragged me off before I could get expelled, especially since I threatened to tear off his dick and choke him with it. However, those occasional moments paled in comparison to the coming shit storm.

"I Can't Believe It. They Fucking Forgot My Birthday."

Most stories people tell begin on that morning of September 11, 2001. Mine starts the night before. I had fucked up my ankle something awful during my soccer game and had to ice it all night to keep the swelling down. We lost the game, too, but that wasn't why I was so upset. I was upset because September 12, 2001 marked my eighteenth birthday. The one I had been waiting my entire life to finally reach so I could make a legal break for it. And there I was, hobbling around in terrific pain.

September 11 dawned with my mother waking me up, crying. She's a hysterical person about most things so it took me a minute



to realize that something serious had actually happened, but not death-in-the-family levels of serious. I hopped on my one good foot to the TV in the living room and watched the same newsreel loop the rest of the country was glued to at that same moment. As the magnitude of what had occurred and who was responsible sunk in, I immediately became scared for the safety of both my family and me. Only this time, I was terrified of being put in an internment camp, like the Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor.

Or worse—having a shitty eighteenth birthday.

I do not cheapen the tragic loss of life that occurred that day in New York, but it did completely ruin my eighteenth birthday—mostly because everyone forgot. As time passed, I wasn't just angry with 9/11 for ruining my really important birthday. I had become mad at NOFX. Not only were the big NOFX fans the goons who beat me up in high school (again, for being goth. For all they knew, I was simply another non-white) but now there was this super popular "Not My President" shirt everyone had on at punk shows. I was nineteen and thought it was cool, too. Until I was introduced as someone's "Muslim friend." Oh, yes. I was suddenly the fringe minority that was cool to associate with and gave you punk cred. What the fuck is worse? Having honest racism cut you down, or having dishonest smiles so someone can seem diverse and cool? Nothing screams social consciousness like having a female Arab Muslim punk friend post-9/11, apparently, and it felt like everyone needed to cash in on this hot commodity. People I never would have expected it from used their friendship with me as the ultimate "fuck you" against the White Reagan Fox News America.

Most Muslims Don't Wear Turbans

Only a few years ago did I learn a new buzzword: Islamophobia. A real thing, it is the fear of Islam and those who practice Islam. I believe the number one proponent of Islamophobia were those shit stains on Fox News. It is 2014, and not a day goes by where I don't glance at the Fox News TV in the break room of my work and see a video or photo of someone Muslim and the need to insist they're all terrifying people specifically out to get white Americans. I read several news sources every day, usually for murders and cryptozoological sightings, and not one other news source mentions these stories that Fox News headlines with.

I was listening to one of the biggest comedy podcasts in the country and the host openly admitted that news images of angry Arab men protesting scares the fuck out of him. One time, a self-professed socially conscious individual asked me if I "spoke Muslim." My look of confusion and long-lasting, "Uhhhh..." helped them recognize they had misspoken and they quickly corrected with, "I'm sorry, I mean, do you know how to speak Islam?" Even my liberal artist boss at one of my old jobs, in an effort to make small talk, asked me, "So what do you think about terrorism?" Choosing my words wisely, I slowly broke it down as best I could that he was much more frightened of it than anyone living in a multi-million dollar Los Angeles home should be. He stared at me for a long time afterwards, and I wondered if I was the first Muslim woman he had ever personally spoken to, especially since he had sold multiple pricey artworks of Muslim women. He was probably wondering if I had just called him an idiot. In all fairness, I kind of had.

That's really the heart of the big, stupid issue here. Stereotyping. It's like when *Saturday Night Live* did that "The Californians" sketch, where blonde dummies in giant beachside homes talk excessively about what freeways to take at different parts of the day. The amount of friends I have that sent me that clip, laughing, saying "Oh my god, that's you" made me lie awake in bed. Sure, I've complained about freeways, and made references to how driving in particular directions during a certain time of day is horrific, and god fucking help you if you have to even consider the 101 Freeway anywhere near Hollywood on a Friday afternoon—but how the fuck am I immediately linked to something this superficial and image-obsessed?

Because stereotyping is the easiest thing a brain can do. I may be from Southern California and call everything I see, including plants and animals, "Dude," but I'm hardly the slack jawed, well-dressed,

Less Than Zero waif. And I might be Arab and raised Muslim, but that doesn't mean I'm a subservient woman in a hijab, making fertilizer bombs to take on airplanes. The dumbest Arab stereotype of them all is that the villain terrorists are all Arab men in turbans and beards, trying to specifically kill white Christian Americans.

I think one of the biggest issues people don't seem to understand is when these so-called terrorists are killing people, they're murdering other Muslims in their home country ninety-nine percent of the time. As an Arab woman who spends time in Arab countries and is a pretty shitty Muslim, I'm a much bigger target than any doughy, Scandinavian-derived weenie safely watching Fox News from their couch. Listen or watch any news outlet and you'll see headlines about bomb blasts killing people in Pakistan or Yemen, not Missouri or Florida.

What many don't seem to grasp is Muslim terrorists hate everything and everyone that isn't them, not just America. These are people who simply want to see the world burn and spend every second they have lighting matches.

Of course I wasn't the only one affected. In the wake of 9/11, after he turned eighteen, my brother was detained at airports more often than I was. My dad wouldn't go to the mosque every Friday, like I know he really enjoyed doing. My mom... well, my mom is kind of crazy and an anarchist. Now she likes loudly talking about how 9/11 was an inside job, how this was all a ploy to gain a monopoly on foreign oil and how all the leaders of the world needed to be assassinated.

As insane as she sounded, I knew it was because she felt threatened and wanted to fight back, but you can't exactly punch ignorance. She had been living as a legal alien here in the States with a green card, but to continue to freely travel to Bahrain—as she had done for thirty years—she had to become a U.S. Citizen. One of the angriest, most tense afternoons I ever spent with my mother (not including the time I was kicked out of the house when I was eighteen for getting a tattoo) was helping her memorize the Pledge of Allegiance.

What Ding-Dong Doesn't Love Falafel?

Today, my entire family is extremely conscious of foreign policy and race relations, but growing up I don't think we ever considered ourselves very politically conscious at all. My brother and my dad now get into arguments about how we should present ourselves ethnically. My dad wants us to go low-key and let people assume we're Italian or Armenian. My brother wants to fly a banner across the front of our house that reads, "JESUS WAS AN ARAB AND SO AM I." I fall right in the middle. I'm incredibly proud of who I am and the beautiful culture I was lucky enough to be raised in, but also don't want any dummies thinking it's okay to just start confronting me with their half-baked ideas and ramming their opinions down my throat. It can also ruin my day if I see fear and/or glee in a person's face when I have to correct someone who assumes I can speak Spanish. Or if I remember my shit eighteenth birthday. That's still a downer.

I can't shed my Arab-ness, nor would I ever want to. It's not just in my bones and blood, but it's my upbringing. I may not believe in any deities now, but I do have a particular soft spot for Muslims because I relate to them. Arab and Muslim culture are so intertwined that it's impossible to separate them. And have you ever tasted anything as delicious as Arabic food? I sure fucking haven't.

9/11 made it so I feel like I'm still getting picked on for being an outsider when I have done nothing but exist.

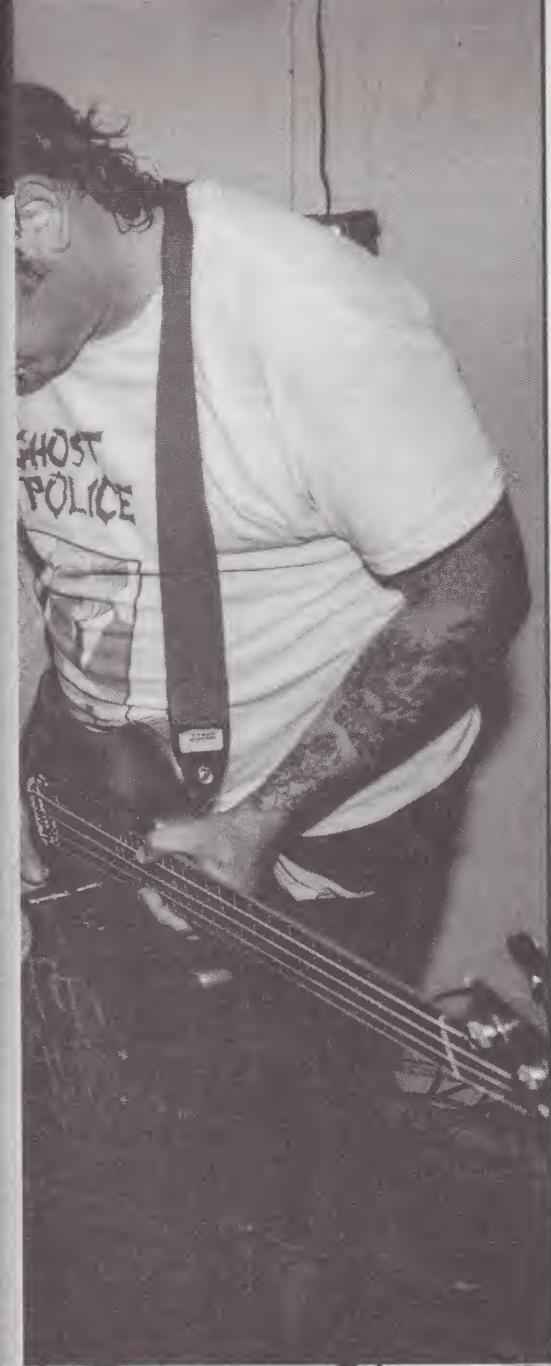
I have two flights planned this summer and I'm already tense about whether a stranger is going to be getting their fingers between the underwire of my bra and my boob again. But when I talk about it, and make fun of it, I feel better. When I see other Muslim punks, even when they're being paraded about as a novelty, I don't feel like such a lone weirdo. And when I see the words "Never Forget" over an American flag, I can't help but laugh about how much those assholes refuse to actually let me do just that.





THE WIFE IS CUTTING THE HUSBAND IN HALF WITH A CHAINSAW!

MUHAMMAD



I've got this half-assed theory about bands and personality types. Bands are often made up from some mix of über-organized individuals, clownish fuck ups, brilliant artists, and "normal" dudes. The balance is key. Having a band full of focused and organized individuals can result in either constant in-fighting and/or major label aspirations. A band full of clownish fuck ups is great to hang out with, but nobody has their shit together enough to book shows or record and release music. Sometimes the music produced by these bands reflect their personality types: über-organized bands make clean, precise music, while a band full of fuck ups make a chaotic mess. I'm sure there are fleets of d-bags in corporate music offices trying to come up with the right balance of personalities to produce the perfect band.

Muhammadali is not this perfect balance. In fact, as far as I can tell, this band represents one of the worst possible combinations: a bunch of brilliant, artistic fuck ups. Let me be clear: they aren't fucked-up, brilliant artists. Those people seem torn apart by angst and destined for a tragic ending. Jeff and John of Muhammadali aren't crippled by angst. That takes too much work and, besides, this case of beer isn't gonna drink itself. But they aren't your run of the mill fuck ups either. Slap on any of their releases— *MUHAMMADALI s/t, And That's How I Forgot about the Bomb, and Future Songs*— and you will quickly realize that these are some seriously smart and talented dudes. Sure, it's chaotic, deceptively simple at times, and just lo-fi enough to keep the squares away. Scratch a little deeper and we're in the realm of art, the domain of Flaming Lips, Hickey, and Butthole Surfers. Okay, that might not be art to you, but I'm not going to get worked up debating that with you. Besides, this case of beer isn't gonna drink itself.

Introduction by Kevin Dunn
Interview by Kevin Dunn and Todd Taylor
Photos by Patrick Houdek
Layout by Matt "Seemed like a good idea at the time" Average

John Zambrano—guitar, vocals
Jeff Smith—bass
Taylor—tour drummer

Kevin: Let's start with the history of the band.

John: Jeff and I played together since 2000 or 1999, something like that?

Jeff: Yeah, and then we didn't really start this band for a while.

John: 2009?

Jeff: We just had no clue about merch or anything like that. We were just trying to play shows.

John: Well, we put out a split tape, first thing, with this band from Houston called Black Congress. That was 2009.

Kevin: Is that *And That's How I Forgot about the Bomb*?

John: Yeah, that's the one. Then there were a couple years and then we put out the split with Unfun. And all of this stuff was recorded for the LP, but it just came out last year.

Kevin: It seemed like I've heard your guy's CD-R circulating around for awhile.

John: Yeah. He only made fifty tapes so we had to make CDs.

Kevin: Are you guys perfectionists, because I heard you guys record a new album and scrap the whole thing and record it again. [laughter]

Jeff: I don't think it has anything to do with being a perfectionist. It's the guy who was recording it. We had a falling out with him, so it took us a whole year to rerecord this record.

John: Well he wanted to play second guitar in our band. And he bought all this gear and he said, "Come to my house and record for free." I'm like, "Okay we'll go and record." Got a couple of days done and then him and his wife decided to get a divorce.

Jeff: Yeah. So it was just like, there's nothing we can do.

Kevin: Did he take the master tapes?

John: No. It wasn't anywhere. It wasn't done.

Jeff: It wasn't, but it was on its way to being done.

John: He had his own issues, so we're just like, "Okay, we'll just start over."

Kevin: You started over. Was it a substantial difference the second time around?

Jeff: I think the second time was better, yeah. The first was a little more raw. I think I have a couple on CDs and we did it with different drummers—like we did one song with one drummer then re-recorded again with another drummer, just to see which one was better.

Taylor: And then go on tour with another drummer. [laughter]

Kevin: Okay, so what is it with Muhammadali and drummers? How many drummers are or have actually been in the band? [laughter]

John: We had Benjamin, who recorded the first thing with us, and then he kind of quit the day we were supposed to be recording at the studio. And the engineer guy is a drummer that we've known forever, Chris Ryan.

Jeff: So he just recorded all the stuff.

John: So he's like, "I'll just play drums and stuff. I know how to play it all."

Jeff: And that's the self-titled LP.

John: But then we got Juan to play with us and then...

Jeff: Funboy.

John: And then we got Gomer and then we

toured last year with two drummers, so that was fun.

Jeff: And they're all still good. Like Juan, he just couldn't make it for the trip. He still plays with us. So I guess we have a lot of drummers. [laughter]

Kevin: Do you have a rotating lineup of whoever can play drums?

John: No, it's Juan. Juan is our drummer.

Jeff: If Juan can't make it, we got friends around. He lives in Austin and he's played with us before.

John: He played on our first tour, 'cause our drummer then couldn't go on tour for that first tape we did.

Kevin: And of course Taylor is in the drummer pool. [laughter] So what's the song writing process like for you guys?

Jeff: We play a lot together so a lot of it came from just jamming a lot. And later, you play something you like and it sticks in your head and you're like, "Oh, I got to remember that," and I think a lot of the songs came from that.

John: The first thing though, Jeff was like, "Hey, you got all those songs recorded. Let's just do those." But at the same time it's like, "I got an idea. It's not a song."

Jeff: We all help each other, it's not like one person is writing a song. We kind of all help in ways and it's always changing.

Kevin: And the lyrics?

Jeff: Lyrics is all this guy [pointing to John], and some of me. We think alike. [laughter] Pretty much anything we're going to say would probably be the exact same thing the other person was going to say.

Taylor: The dynamic duo. [laughter]

Jeff: It's all about keeping it simple, too. That's what I like about it. There are no huge verses in the songs, where you've got to remember all this stuff.

John: Yes. You come up with one thing and you just repeat it over and over.

Kevin: Like "I'm not stupid. I'm not retarded." [laughter]

John: Well, that one's stolen. That is a Hickey song.

Jeff: But he says it the other way. He says, "I am stupid. I am retarded." I think.

John: I don't know. [laughter]

Kevin: Todd and I were actually talking about this earlier with Otis Redding's response to hearing Bob Dylan and saying that there are too many fucking words. That will never be an accusation made against you guys. [laughter] Is there a reason for that?

John: Probably because...I don't know...I'm not an English student. [laughter] I could tell you one thing. I'll say, "What do you think about this idea?" And it'll be "Ah, that's stupid." [laughter]

Kevin: It was great, because there are so many songs with just a basic line like, "Maybe I'm in need of medical attention."

Jeff: Yes! [laughter]

Kevin: And it comes across as this intense way of trying to convince you that I'm okay. [laughter]

John: That song is about my girlfriend. She is into spiritualism and wants everything

to be nice and happy and funny, like enlightenment. Okay, well, what's so good about that? [laughter]

Kevin: The song is called "Living a Japanese dream." Is that a reference to Eastern spiritualism?

John: Yeah, it's like, "Everything is cool. Everything is great. Everything is beautiful. Everything is amazing. Everything is wonderful." It's not that great once you're alone and thinking about stuff. No, it's not okay.

Kevin: Because there is the issue of medical attention. [turns to Jeff] You broke your hand.

Jeff: Yes. A lot of stuff happened this time last year.

John: They flipped the van. I almost lost my fingers.

Todd: Story to tell. [laughter]

Jeff: Yes, I was coming back from Fun Fun Fun Fest—not us, but my other band—and we just blew a tire. It was just a random accident. We flipped the van. I got around twenty stitches in both of my fingers. The doctor said, "You're probably going to lose your fingers." I said, "Really?"

Todd: He only needs one. [laughter]

Jeff: In general, it was just one scary day. I had to stop and think about things after that, especially with the van. Before then we didn't really care, we just did it. We're like, "Get the van. Let's go. I don't care how the tire looks." And now we're trying to have some nice new tires.

Todd: Something that can take the trip.

Jeff: You don't realize it's just like that. That was one of the things—with that show we actually got paid well. We had money to go buy new tires that we made from the show. We just didn't think about it. I'm trying to better myself. Think about things.

Kevin: Did you have health insurance?

Jeff: No, absolutely not. It's pretty expensive. The bills, I'm still getting them.

Kevin: So do you guys have day jobs?

Jeff: Yes, I work in a restaurant. Not a very good job, but it pays my bills and stuff.

John: I think we all do that service industry thing. I bar back.

Jeff: He works at a pretty cool bar. It's an old famous speakeasy bar. The guy who owns it is just a wingnut, a cool artist guy.

Todd: This question is a two-parter. For somebody who has never heard you guys, what's your musical heritage? How big does Texas play into your style?

Jeff: We really do like a lot of old psych-rock from Texas. I think, for me, it's more of punk music and blending it with an indie rock touch. Like more of a Pixies thing, but have that punk edge there. The songs are simple like the Ramones.

John: Yeah. I was going to say, I saw *Rock and Roll High School* on TV when I was eight and my sister brought home *Suburbia*. Her name was Spider and she had a mohawk. [laughter]

Jeff: Yeah. It was over after that. [laughter]

Kevin: I know there was a second part to your question, but let me interrupt here because I am not buying the "simple songs" line. Okay, maybe with lyrics. Simple lyrics.



THEY CHOP HIM UP AND COOK HIM AND THEY SERVE IT TO THE FAMILY.

John: You know, I've been thinking about this lately:
What if none of us wanted to fuck?

Kevin: I hear you speaking
but I just don't understand the words. [laughter]

[laughter] But the music is not. Maybe it is deceptively simple. There's way more shit going on in the music.

Jeff: I don't know how to answer that.

Todd: Because there's definitely layers.

John: I think we'd rather be loud and play music than try to tell you a story or anything.

Jeff: Yeah. [laughter]

Todd: Like more of an experience, than a story?

Jeff: Maybe if we could figure both of them out, we'd do really well. [laughter]

Taylor: It's like you were saying the other

day, the older the people get, they expect you to listen to less harder, less faster music. But you're like "The older I get, it's going to harder, faster stuff." That still has an influence on y'all's writing and vibe stuff, I think. It's all heavy based, but really melodic and still catchy and soulful.

John: Yeah. My friend, Danny Morgan, he came up with this trick. He's like, "Man, I keep singing the whole time. My voice is in there the whole time."

Jeff: Yeah, but that dude's got a lot to say, though. [laughter]

Todd: I don't want to superimpose anything on you guys, but I think of stuff like the Butthole Surfers, Flaming Lips, even like, to a certain extent, Jesus Lizard, Roky Erickson.

Jeff: Jesus And Mary Chain?

Kevin: Yeah. Yeah.

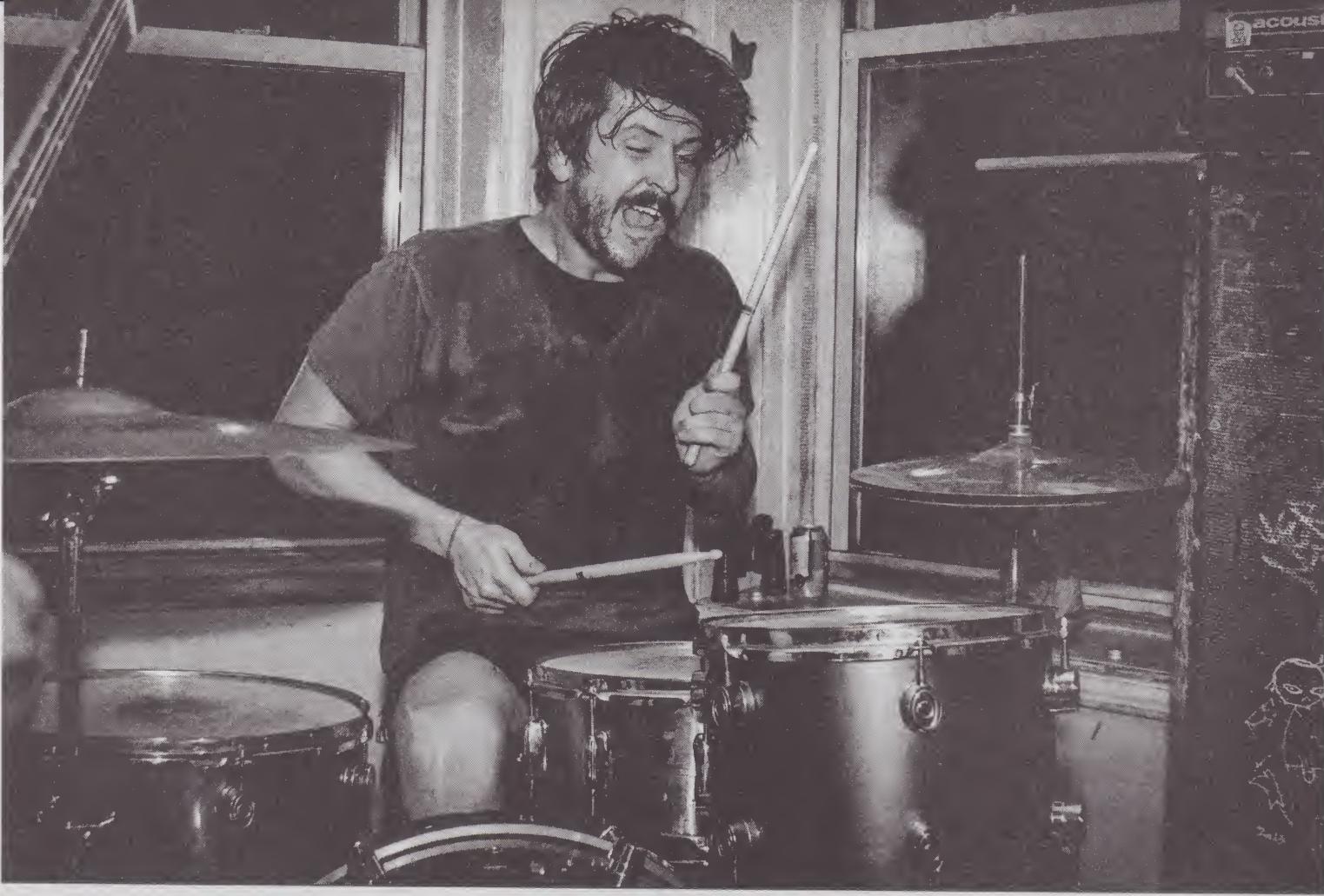
Jeff: I grew up listening to...

Kevin: All those bands. [laughter]

Jeff: Yeah. The Cure, Prince.

Todd: But the Cure was never a heavy band. I like that, too, because you have...

Jeff: We're '80s.



Todd: Yeah. We've been talking about powerviolence this afternoon, and sometimes I just want a fucking hook once in a while. [laughter]

John: Yeah.

Todd: It's hard because people think they're mutually exclusive, and they're not. Some of the best hardcore—like Minor Threat—is incredibly catchy. That's why these people still listen to it today.

Jeff: You will never forget the first time you hear it.

John: We were both in powerviolence bands, I guess.

Todd: I just want a hook sometimes. I wish I could give them a couple of bucks. "Can you put a hook in this song?" [laughter]

John: We were listening to Green Day on the way up here, that *1,039/Smoothed Out Slappy Hours*. It's like, man, he hadn't figured out how to write a pop hit yet. They were kind of catchy, but none of them were like... It's not a hit. He finally figured it out.

Kevin: Someone gave him the secret formula.

John: Yeah. Not that it's any good or anything. [laughter]

Kevin: "I can make a lot of money from this." [laughter]

Todd: The second part to that is, what about your family heritage or heritage that you embody goes into the music? What gets transferred into the music?

John: My mom's crazy. She's schizophrenic,

bipolar. My brother, too. It runs in my family.

Jeff: Yeah. I think, maybe, my brothers all brought me up on music. When I was a kid, I think this is what I wanted to do because of my brothers.

Todd: Saw it as a possibility, something you could do?

Jeff: Yeah. It's weird because they would tell me stories about me running around singing April Wine songs and all kinds of funny stuff. I think about it now and it makes complete sense.

John: Singing into brushes. [laughter] Like, I don't even know what.

Jeff: Aldo Nova, Rush, anything like that? [laughter]

John: What was I singing into the brushes?

Jeff: Boy George. [laughter]

John: Boy George. Wham! I don't know. [laughter]

Jeff: Definitely, I think the Texas thing. We do embody and take on a lot of those bands because there are such legends in Texas like Butthole Surfers. I didn't get to see them until real late. I saw them in the early '90s. They were on tour with Stone Temple Pilots. I think Flaming Lips might even have been on that show, too. Gibby Haynes, dude. He came out and was blasting these shotguns with blanks over the crowd. You don't have to see that wild stuff. It really changes you. You're like, "Yeah, they're always going to be one of my favorites." I wish we sounded more like them. [laughter]

Kevin: Do you consider yourself a Texas band? **Jeff:** Oh, yeah. Definitely.

Kevin: Have you seen the new Ben Snakepit collection? He refers to you guys as the best band in Texas.

Jeff: Man, I think that guy's the best. He's really cool and awesome. He starts a band once a year. It's a really good band every time. He's got it. I love that dude.

Kevin: Here's a totally left field question. I decided I'd check out some stuff on Muhammadali. [laughter] You go to the internet and there is this video you guys did of this eleven-year-old kid interviewing you.

Jeff and John [in unison]: Oh yeah.

Kevin: What's the back story? First off, it's a fucking awesome video.

Jeff: It is. He's a little famous guy, dude. [laughter]

John: He's having an art show where he's taking pictures of bands all around...

Jeff: He got to interview some pretty famous people. Jackson is his name. I think his dad's pushing him to be this photographer.

John: Because his dad's a photographer and a writer. His son took an interest in it.

Jeff: He's actually pretty good.

John: He contacted us and said, "We want to come to your show, take pictures, and then interview you."

Jeff: I felt too weird. I was way drunk. I was like, "I'm going to sit this one out." [laughter]

When I was eight my sister brought home *Suburbia*. Her name was Spider and she had a mohawk. [laughter]

John: Because it was after the show. But his dad was really nice and the kid was really nice. I think he asked us what our hobbies were. I mentioned that masturbation was one of mine. [laughter] And I didn't realize I was still talking to an eleven-year-old kid. [laughter] His dad wasn't mad, he was like, "That's okay. He knows he can come to me with any questions." That might be sooner than later. [laughter]

Todd: It's all Muhammadali's fault now.

Taylor: He had a list of questions for his dad the next day. [laughter]

Kevin: What's awesome about it is, John—the kid is so earnest and you were so respectful.

John: That's right, until that one. [laughter]

Kevin: No, it's great. It's like the Fugazi documentary *Instrument*, with the interview with a middle school kid.

Todd: Public access lady.

Kevin: Yeah, it was awesome. But one of the questions Jackson asked was, "Where do you think you will be two years from now?" That interview was done two years ago, and your answer was, "Alive." [laughter]

Todd: Congratulations.

Kevin: So you made it, man! [laughter]

Todd: Goal accomplished. [laughter]

John: I think that is a pretty good goal for everybody.

Todd: Did you know Ben Snakepit is in *Instrument*? He's like, "I'm not going to the show." [laughter]

Kevin: And doesn't he show up in the documentary about the Plan-It-X Fest?

Todd: Really?

John: I was watching a Black Flag interview with Henry Rollins and he just tore in to this poor little kid. The kid handled it pretty good but I don't know what he was asking him.

Jeff: I think we are trying to do two different things, us and Henry Rollins.

Todd: Henry's got an agenda. [laughter]

John: He really wanted to impart some wisdom on this kid but he was really mean.

Jeff: I want to help kids. If they hang out with us and hear our music, I want them to feel better about themselves. I don't necessarily want them to be like, "Oh, man." But that's what you get from a lot of bands, they just get jaded or something. They treat people kind of weird and get blocked up and forget that these kids are looking for help. Some of them, not everybody. Especially in real punk shows, you get a lot of little drunk kids. Houston is like that. It's a lot of young kids.

Kevin: Do I hear right that you guys run an all-age space in Houston?

Jeff: No, his house was a good spot for a

while for shows. I lived in a warehouse for a while.

John: Then they stole our air conditioning.

Jeff: We came back from tour and we walk in and the whole house is just completely destroyed. They took all the AC units, took the refrigerator, took the stove, took everything out of this house. It had been sitting there for, who knows how many days, just all windows completely open. It was just infested with thousands and thousands of mosquitoes. You couldn't even hang out there for a minute.

John: I think they'd had enough of us in that neighborhood. It was like third ward Houston.

Jeff: The neighborhood was so cool, though. The neighbors all liked us.

John: They didn't want us living there anymore.

Jeff: Really? [laughter]

John: Yeah for sure, that's my conspiracy mind. They didn't want any more house shows and parties. So they robbed us. Well, I got the hint and moved out of there. Dude Jams came there in a Frito-Lay truck. [laughter]

Jeff: Yeah, they were there. We cooked spaghetti for them on the front porch. We just see these guys casing their truck and they were about to do it and we ran up with plates of spaghetti and we were like, "Seriously, you are about to get covered in spaghetti." [laughter]

Kevin: "We're gonna noodle you, motherfuckers." [laughter]

John: And Brandon was like, "Ahhh, we're gonna go to Austin now." [laughter]

Jeff: That was a fun night though. They played at New Orleans. They didn't get paid but they gave them a bunch of bottles.

John: They "gave them" a bunch of liquor bottles. [laughter] Note the airquotes, with ABC stickers on them. [laughter]

Jeff: And it was Café Patron. [collective groans] It was so nasty, it was gross.

John: That was Dude Jam's gift to us. But we drank it. [laughter]

John: What was that two-part question? Oh yeah, the musical heritage. That was my older brothers and sisters. New wave.

Todd: People who haven't been to Texas don't realize how massive it is. It's kind of an island in a lot of ways. You have to put in the miles to get out of Texas.

Jeff: Yeah, that's why we tour once a summer. It's hard for us to get out and even though we're right next to Louisiana, that's still a good distance. The south is a pretty weird place to go play shows: Mississippi, Alabama, and all that. Some of our dearest friends are from over there. We probably should go over

there more because it's like a hop, skip and a jump but yet we wait all summer to do this huge drive, get all exhausted and tired, and we're like, "We are just going to New Orleans and Birmingham." [laughter]

Jeff: Hey, have you guys seen *Entering Texas*? I've been watching that a lot recently. It's a movie that the Butthole Surfers made. It's great, dude. It's like a twenty-minute movie or something. It's all about this family driving through rural Texas and they see this barbecue place and all the Butthole Surfers are working there. They get the guy's little kid and they chop him up and cook him and they serve it to the family. They're like, "Can I have something to drink?" and they give them mushroom tea and they start tripping. At the end, the Butthole Surfers are playing and the wife is cutting the husband in half with a chainsaw. It's really, really good. [Laughter, followed by awkward pause].

John: Yeah, we're not that cool [laughter].

Kevin: You've got a new release, *Future Songs*. Is it just on tape now?

Jeff: It's just on tape right now. He's going to put it on LP.

Kevin: Chris Mason (of Dirt Cult Records)?

Jeff: Yeah. He just didn't have time. It all happened so fast. He really just put the tape out to help us have some new stuff to sell on this trip.

Todd: How did you get into contact with Chris or did he get into contact with you?

Jeff: Through Awesome Fest. We kept running into him and he said he would put it out. It ends up his family lives in Houston, too. So he was coming in at Christmastide and we started hanging out a little bit. I don't think we could have found anyone better to do it because he's so nice and solid.

Kevin: He said when you guys offered him the *Future Songs*, you said, "You're not going to like this," but Chris was like, "I'm in!" [laughter]

John: Homeboy wanted to do it, too. I was like, "If you don't like it, I'll get somebody else to do it."

Jeff: I definitely wanted to give Chris a chance though because he put the LP out and did such a good job with it.

John: You know, I've been thinking about this lately: What if none of us wanted to fuck?

Kevin: I hear you speaking but I just don't understand the words. [laughter]

Jeff: Yeah, I think our goal is to try and do a record a year.

Kevin: That's ambitious.

John: For us, that's very ambitious.

Jeff: Yeah, but it's something we can do. Like

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We just see these guys casing their truck and they were about to do it and we ran up with plates of spaghetti and we were like, “Seriously, you are about to get covered in spaghetti.”

I said, we jam all the time. We can write songs. It's just a matter of making it happen. We kind of get lazy. We like Texas style. We smoke a lot of weed and it's hard to make things... to get it all done. I think if we do six albums in six years, that would be really good.

Todd: That's a huge catalog.

Jeff: I think it's just time to start doing the opposite of what we usually do where we waited so long. I just didn't think about it. I didn't think about having stuff for sale until it was three years later. People were, "Hey, you got any music I can take home?" We're like, "Here's a CD-R. Give me two bucks." It's like, "Hey, wait a minute. We could actually put this out on a tape and charge a few more dollars."

Todd: Put gas in the tank.

Jeff: I don't think we cared at first. We were like, "We got the money in our pocket. Let's just go. We don't need anything." Just draw our name on a shirt. We just didn't think about it too much.

Todd: It would be awesome if doctors did that. "You know what? Just sign this shirt and I'll fix your fingers. You got a tape? Okay, great. Surgery." [laughter]

Jeff: That guy was actually really cool, though. It was out in the country. It was in Le Grange where ZZ Top lived, in the same town. He had a big beard.

Kevin: They all do there. [laughter]

Jeff: He had a big beard and he's just sewing my fingers up and telling me about his daughter getting DWIs in Austin. He was cool. I wish I had the money to pay him because he hooked me up. I got my fingers. I just, "I don't have it."

Kevin: John, you've got a kid. How does that affect touring and stuff?

Jeff: It's hard. I've got a nine-year-old, too. Four years ago, when we started doing this, all I did was miss her on the road. It was just, "What am I doing here?" We would go and play a show, in Denver or somewhere, there would be five people there. You're like, "What are we doing here? I just want to go home to my daughter." I guess the thing is, it's all for them, too. "Our parents did this. They weren't hugely successful, but they did it because they wanted to."

John: My girlfriend's an artist, so she's really supportive in that way. She does performance art, which is really weird. I'm supportive of what she loves to do.

Jeff: I play in a band with my girlfriend and she's super rad about me going on the road. The only thing that makes me feel weird is that all these experiences I have, I wish I could share with her. I wish she could be here, too. She would love you guys. She'd love everybody here. She'd have so much fun. It's the same thing with John. He wants his daughter here at the fest at the beach. She

would go crazy.

John: She likes the beach.

Jeff: She might not like the bands though. [laughter]

Todd: I just want to make a comment—when you miss your daughters, do you go back and be very present and be a good dad then.

John: I'm a horrible dad. [laughter]

Jeff: For our tour kickoff, we called it Bad Dad Rock. [laughter]

John: It's hard to be in the moment though, with the Internet and television and distractions. That's good advice. I like that. Just be in the moment even if it sucks. [laughter]

Todd: Just remember that when you're away, you kind of take away all that noise. You go, "It will be great." Sometimes, you're just back and you're, "Yeah, this kind of sucks. Can I get away for a day? Can I play Seattle tonight and just come back? Why is this fucking Star Trek thing not working yet?" [laughter]

Jeff: Yeah, no shit. I thought we would be way far ahead by now.

Kevin: Full of flying fucking cars. I want to get teleported.

Jeff: If they ever invent flying cars, we don't need to have one.

Kevin: DUI. [laughter]

John: No, we don't drink and drive because it's just not good. I ride a bike at home. I drink and bike.

Kevin: That's Ben Snakepit, man. He's been an inspiration to me about that. I haven't been biking and drunk since I was a teenager, but recently I realized I could do that again. There's nothing better than biking around town with a buzz on. [laughter]

Jeff: I love riding my bike downtown and there's nobody there. I'm like, "This is it."

John: You're always downtown at like five when you get off work. You need to experience that downtown deserted.

Todd: Post-apocalyptic. [laughter]

Jeff: L.A., that place is weird. Downtown L.A.

John: Ooooh, we saw somebody get knocked out last time we were there.

Jeff: We saw pretty much what you're supposed to see in L.A. Skid row. We saw some guy get knocked out.

Todd: What was the context?

Jeff: Who knows? There was just a bar fight outside a bar and we were driving by. We're like, "Stop, stop, stop. Let's watch this. That poor guy just got knocked out."

John: He was big, too, and this little guy just knocked him out. He just laid out on the floor for half a minute. His girlfriend is hitting everybody with her purse. She's like "Stop it."

Jeff: I went to some punk show after that across the street from the Greyhound station.

It's where the Greyhound station is right across the street. It was crazy going from the show that we played in L.A., the Food Not Bombs show. There was a bunch of kids and families. I go to this show and there's just all these mongrels hanging out in the street. [laughter]

Todd: I was telling Kevin this the other day. We do a DJ night and this totally aggro guy showed up and he had the grease paint across his eyes. He was picking fights with everybody.

John: With paint on his face? [laughter]

Todd: Yeah, it was kind of like it would be Adam Ant, but it was totally black and grease paint instead of the powder blue one. It was weird. He was just really aggro and the guy was claiming a gang, but had no tattoos on him which is very rare in Los Angeles. Then he was picking a fight with the bartender and then asking for a beer and then picking a fight with the bartender. Then he starts picking fights with people in the bar. He's just like, "Do you know who my gang is? You need to look us up on Facebook, fool." [laughter]

Todd: Then literally everybody just starts laughing at him. They're like, "Get out, get out, get out," and he just kind of walks out. His friend kind of pulled him out.

Jeff: I don't ever want to be that guy.

Todd: No. It was like three or something. He was shit wasted, too.

John: What time do bars close there?

Todd: Oh, it was three in the afternoon. [laughter]

John: Our bar where I work is a couple of blocks away from the county jail. You've got to be very tolerant. Then very, "It's time for you to go dude." [laughter]

Jeff: I've seen crazy stuff happen there though with just random weirdos walking in.

John: Like you? [laughter]

Jeff: I actually saw a guy, like an ex-con, throw a kid through a window on Main Street. The way it happened, it was so brutal because he grabs the kid and kind of loses his balance and falls through the glass. The glass is just like a guillotine on this kid's head. Just [makes slicing sound].

John: It was all 1930s plate glass windows.

Jeff: Just opened this guy's head up. The guy, the con, has just like got this huge smile on his face. The cops are there in one second. They put him in the car. He's going back to prison. He was just doing what he knows best, I guess. It was really strange.

Kevin: Well, on that note... [laughter]

John: I hope you all don't print this because it was fun just hanging out.

Kevin: Absolutely.

John: Let's do it again.

Todd: Next year. [laughter]



FRENCH EXIT

MY GOAL WAS TO MAKE THE
BAND SOUND LIKE HOOTIE AND
THE BLOWFISH.

Bobb: Guitar
Tim: Bass

Duke: Drums
Anthony: Guitar



I LIKE FRENCH STUFF.

French fries, French onion soup, French bread pizza. Hell, I'll even drink a Perrier® if the beer is all gone. So it shouldn't be surprising that when I noticed French Exit's name on several show lineups in the Los Angeles area, I pulled them up on the ol' Interwebs and checked out their small back catalog of Bandcamp releases. I was happy to find this seemed to be a band that was able to create catchy, anthemic, mid-tempo punk rock with some self-loathing and self-deprecation mixed in lyrically. In short, right up my alley, though not necessarily something I'd expected to find in my own backyard geographically.

I kind of forgot about them until I got a copy of the band's criminally overlooked debut full-length, *Guts & Black Stuff* late last year. Everything I remembered was there: the crunchy, taut, two-guitar sound, the shouting/singing dual vocalists and the thoughtful yet totally relatable lyrics. To my ears, something else was at play that I hadn't noticed in their earlier work. The album's production was as impressive as the songs and performance. What isn't present is as important as what is: the guitar tones are raw and biting,



refreshingly not drenched in studio effects—a "Gibsons plugged directly into Marshalls" kind of thing. Every whoa-oh and every background vocal is so well placed. Nothing is hiding behind walls of reverb. Who was responsible for crafting the band's sound?

Turns out their bassist Tim is also the band's engineer, who was present for our interview along with the dual guitarist/vocalists Bobb and Anthony. Drummer Duke was absent. Coincidentally, I ran into Bob and Anthony before the interview in the local liquor store, all of us picking up the requisite brewed beverages needed for the interview. I glanced at them and they at me, intuitively guessing each other's purpose as we paid for the goods and left. Four minutes later, as I walked up the hill to Razorcake HQ there they were, beer in hand. We all laughed about the liquor store encounter and introduced ourselves. I was confident this interview was going to be fun and interesting. I was not disappointed.

Introduction by Garrett Barnwell

Interview by Garrett Barnwell and Todd Taylor

Photos by El Diablo and Paul Silver

Transcribed by Ian Jones | Layout by Daryl

Todd: Anthony, are you still bitter that you play guitar for this band that sounds nothing like Kid Dynamite? [laughter]

Anthony: Sometimes. [laughter] Every once in a while, after too many practices, I'm like, "Man, if we just sounded more like Kid Dynamite!"

Todd: But that was one of the initial conversations you had with Tim, is that correct?

Anthony: Yeah the three of us, when we first started talking about it, I wanted to just sing in a band that sounded like Kid Dynamite, and now I barely sing in a band that sounds nothing like Kid Dynamite.

Tim: We did cover Kid Dynamite for a bit though, too.

Anthony: The third song we learned was Kid Dynamite's "Ronald Miller Story."

Tim: Anthony barely played guitar on that. So he had that dream for a small amount of time.

Anthony: Like two shows and six practices.

Todd: So Tim, you're a dream crusher. Is that correct?

Tim: Yeah, the first time I picked him up for practice I was like, "Where's your guitar?" And he said, "I'm not playing guitar," and I automatically was like, "Ooooh," like, I was not into the idea of having a front man.

Garrett: Was it a silent car ride?

Tim: That was our first practice. You used a friend's guitar that was at Duke's place.

Bobb: You picked it up because we were figuring out songs, you were kinda plunkin'

around with us. But it wasn't under the guise of being a guitar player.

Anthony: I'm still barely a guitar player.

Bobb: Aw, c'mon, you didn't even own an electric guitar.

Anthony: No, I didn't. I only had an acoustic guitar.

Bobb: Little did he know that my goal was to make the band sound like Hootie And The Blowfish.

Anthony: I would have been ready, though!

Todd: So Anthony, second part of the question—what did this band succeed in doing?

Anthony: It made me realize that you can have an idea for something and when you get really creative people involved, they can put it where it needs to go naturally. Nothing is forced, nothing takes a lot of effort. If we had tried to sound like Kid Dynamite it would be forced.

Todd: So...effort—*bad*. How did you guys get together?

Tim: We all knew each other.

Garrett: Did you start writing songs immediately?

Tim: The very first practice we learned two songs.

Anthony: But our first practice wasn't for three months after we sat in the backyard saying, "We should get together and play!"

Todd: Did you try out different band names?

Bobb: I didn't even wanna call the band French Exit because I thought it would be offensive and alienate the entire French Canadian and French markets.

Todd: Has it?

Tim: No! They really want us in Montreal!

IT'S ALWAYS JUST BEEN
CATCHY MUSIC FIRST AND

PAUL SILVER



THEN FILL IN
THE BLANKS.

We keep on getting requests. We get people saying, "Hey, when are you guys coming up here? Can we book you for this festival?" And we're like, "Wow, that's the other side of the world."

Bobb: I'm pretty sure Duke can't get a passport. He can't go to Canada anymore.

Tim: He's not coming back if he goes.

Anthony: If he even gets in.

Tim: Well, we did banter around a couple band names. There were pretty terrible band names.

Anthony: My favorite was Nancy Raygun And The White Russians.

Bobb: That's the one I remember the most. I was thinking about this the other day and I can't believe I suggested this. I wanted to call the band, What's Past Is Prologue.

Garrett: That's really emo.

Bobb: I know, right? But I was still operating under the assumption that we were gonna be a different band.

Tim: I think we all had various ideas coming into the band of what it was going to be like. You both probably wanted something more emo. I was really into Lawrence Arms exclusively at the time, so I just wanted to write Lawrence Arms songs and have dueling vocals. I think Duke maybe still just wants to play NOFX.

Anthony: Or metal. The more drums he has, the happier he is.

Todd: I don't want you guys to take this the wrong way... [laughter] ...because what you're describing at this point, is this big ball of shit. But, I think that's your charm.

Bobb: I think it's a testament to what Anthony's said, though. You can't force things. You can have these preconceived notions, but when the rubber hits the road, it's gonna go where it's gonna go.

Todd: A lot of the things you're describing, I personally am ambivalent to or don't like. But I like how it's filtered through you guys. I think it's also that Pop Punk, capital-P capital-P, is a slippery slope. I think some people do it really well, but I think the majority of people don't do it well. So I think having that kind of potential for disaster all the time is a good thing musically, for you guys.

Tim: We all bounce things off each other. When I'm writing a song, I always hear in the back of my head, "Not too poppy or the guys are gonna yell and not wanna do this song." So there's this pleasing each other and making sure that we all are still invested in the song and wanna do it. That balance makes the songs.

Garrett: Let us in on the songwriting process. Are you all principal songwriters or...?

Tim: It's a mess. It's usually either Bobb or I who start a song and we'll usually have some lyrical ideas.

Bobb: Like a theme or a word.

Garrett: So like riff-based, lyric-based. You're like, "Hey, I got a lyric here," or "Hey, I got a riff here?"

Tim: Usually all the music for the song—the whole form, bridges, melodies, come first—then we fill in the lyrics later. Anthony writes a lot and we tried to do

some with him giving me lyrics. I asked him to and said, "Hey, I'm gonna try to write to that." Nothing really turned out from it, so we've continued doing this old format. It's weird—it's always just been catchy music first and then fill in the blanks.

Todd: Tim, how many pairs of Converse is too many pairs? You're wearing some spiffies.

Tim: Yeah they're circuit board ones.

Garrett: They're shiny too.

Tim: Just put 'em on today and they're all slippery.

Bobb: Those are brand new.

Tim: My dad used to be an electronic technician so I sent a picture of these home. He was like, "Oh, these are so great," and my mom says, "Tim, how many do you have?"

Garrett: Where was home for you?

Tim: Chicago.

Todd: How many pairs?

Tim: I don't know. I wore a pair a day for over a month.

Todd: So that's thirty.

Tim: And that was a good year ago. So it's in the forties for sure.

Todd: Wow. I have such a limited view of shoe possibilities.

Garrett: So, you guys—you mentioned Lawrence Arms and Kid Dynamite. What were you listening to growing up?

Bobb: I was listening to almost exclusively KLOS radio and K-Earth radio in L.A. Those were the two big stations that came through out in the desert that I got into. And somehow I completely missed alternative rock until about a year ago. [laughter]

Anthony: My dad DJ'd weddings from before I was born until I was eight or nine. So there was always tons of different music being played because he would practice in the garage. It was all over the place. I remember my earliest memory of a song is "Maneater" by Hall & Oats and really liking that song as a little kid. And I remember really liking one of the early Bon Jovi hits.

Bobb: You know what's funny is when you moved to Chicago and I bought your records, I got that Hall & Oats album, so I have the record that is one of your earliest memories.

Tim: The first 7" I ever got was Queen's *Another One Bites the Dust*. My dad gave it to me when I turned five for my birthday. Queen was my favorite band when I was really little, but I grew up listening to a lot of classic rock and whatever my parents had around the house. Oddly, a ton of show tunes.

Todd: Oddly?

Tim: Yeah, my family had season tickets to a musical theater place in Chicago. I was seven and eight going to a musical every other month, so I had a weird musical upbringing. I never really listened to what was popular until high school where I started going to punk shows at Fireside in Chicago. That was the first time I listened to current things.

Todd: I think an overall music appreciation is helpful early on.

Bobb: I didn't even realize what punk was when I was a kid because KLOS used to play the Clash all the time. So I had *London*

Calling when I was in fifth grade and didn't realize it was a punk record. I thought it was just a fuckin' cool record because it had elements of oldies, classic rock stuff, reggae, and everything. That was the closest I ever got to dabbling with ska or anything.

Tim: I remember being a little kid—it was like, third or fourth grade—and we got to draw our favorite musical artist and have the class guess it. Everybody else had pop stars and I drew Dire Straits. Nobody got it. I was near tears in class because nobody knew what I was talking about.

Garrett: Did you do Mark Knopfler with the sweatbands?

Tim: Yes, that's exactly what I did! [laughter]

Todd: So Bobb, you're a big sports fan?

Bobb: I'm a big baseball fan.

Todd: What is the most exciting thing you've experienced from baseball firsthand?

Bobb: I believe it was 1996. [laughter]

Tim: He has the signed game ball, signed by himself.

Bobb: No! It was signed by my whole team. I'm a packrat so I have it still. The coach took the ball and handed it around the dugout, had everybody sign it, myself included, then he gave the ball to me. It was a really touching moment.

Todd: So what'd you do?

Bobb: I hit a triple down the right field line. I want the record to show that I'm a right-handed batter, and at the age of—fuck—ten, I was going the other way with triples down the right field line. I'm pretty impressed with that and it won the game. It was the bottom of the last inning. It scored a run from first and I felt like the biggest badass in the world until the next week, when I went 0-4 and got hit twice.

Tim: I played high school, little league, and everything plenty, too. And when you go down the right field line at that age, it means there's a big twelve-year-old pitching and you couldn't catch up to it.

Bobb: Yeah that was my biggest sports moment.

Garrett: I don't notice any production credits on your album. Are one of you guys a ProTools rat or...?

Anthony: That's all Timbo.

Tim: I recorded it. I don't like putting it out there because it's like, "Here's our band's album," and I don't want it to say, "Produced and engineered by one of the guys." To me it looks bad.

Garrett: Like a demo?

Tim: Yeah.

Todd: Have you ever thought of making a name?

Todd: Tim Raygun...

Tim: I thought about it, but my name is on everybody else's records I record so...

Garrett: Who are the other people you've recorded?

Tim: Dead To Me is the biggest. A lot of the people in our little scene. Horror Squad, The Bomb Pops, Payoff, City Mouse, Bonzai. Dude's Night. I've mixed and mastered for American Lies and Lysol Gang.

Bobb: The VLHS scene pretty much.

Tim: Yeah, the VLHS scene. You're familiar with them. There's the *12th & G* comp. from years ago that I recorded over two weekends.

Garrett: It was just my impression from going through your catalog. I got *Guts and Black Stuff* and I was struck by the maturity and the comfortableness that you guys seem to have in the studio.

Todd: Instrumentally. Not emotionally! [laughter]

Tim: We're gonna get to that in a bit. [laughter]

Garrett: Yeah, for a freshman album it didn't feel like it at all.

Tim: Thanks! We recorded plenty before this. That's flattering to hear because it really was a stressful album to make. I love EPs because you record three or four songs and boom—you mix them, it's done. You can do the whole thing in a week. Doing that amount of stuff over many sessions and numerous locations over the course of a year... it was a project.

Garrett: So you don't have a studio somewhere in an apartment?

Tim: I bring my own gear.

Bobb: Duke's garage is on the back of the album cover. That's where we recorded the drums and some of the guitars.

Tim: Some guitars, some vocals, and some more stuff was recorded at my work. Some was recorded at my place. But yeah, piecing it all together was pretty much whenever, because we all work and nobody could take off two weeks to record an album. It was put together whenever we had spare time.

Tim: We were literally recording guitars at two in the morning after people went home from my work and things like that.

Garrett: Where do you work?

Tim: I work at Neversoft. It's a video game developer, I do sound for them.

Garrett: I'm curious of what you guys think of product endorsement deals for quote unquote "punk bands"?

Todd: You were in a quote-unquote "punk band."

Bobb: I was. We were called Western Front. The main band that brought me into punk rock in high school, like real punk, was Fugazi.

Todd: And what happened?

Bobb: Uh, nothing happened. [laughter] We got T-shirts made and we gave 'em away. Then we didn't have money to make anymore T-shirts, so we stopped being a band.

Anthony: I paid for one of those shirts.

Bobb: We took "donations."

Garrett: I'm curious because when I do reviews for *Razorcake*, when I get review materials, I'll look at the liner notes and I'll see "Thanks to blah blah." Seeing product endorsement stuff rubs me the wrong way.

Anthony: I think it depends on the product.

Garrett: Well, I don't mean like tampons.

Anthony: If some company wants to give me all the strings I need for my guitar and all I have to do is say thanks to this guy and they're not making the strings from child

sweatshops, then I'm cool with that. I'm not gonna do a Scion tour unless they give me a Scion.

Tim: If they were like, "Oh so-and-so clothing label wants you to represent them and you guys are gonna have to wear their stuff," I'd say "No, that's not what I wear." Now, if we're talking endless Converse... But yeah. That's the point. The strings that I use, if that company was like, "We're gonna give you a free year's worth of strings and all you have to do is say, "Thanks," I'd do that.

Bobb: Yeah, 'cause I'm a working stiff and I wouldn't buy that shit otherwise.

Tim: Do you know how much bass strings are? I would love to do that.

Garrett: If some shitty bass string company that you'd never play said hey!...

Tim: No way.

Garrett: You can't fake it.

Tim: Yeah, because that's gonna make me sound crappy and I'm telling people to use something crappy that I don't like.

Bobb: We're gear nerds. So if a guitar company or amp company or string company wanted to give us shit and it was something that we believed in.

Tim: Yeah, all of our stuff is boutique amps and vintage guitars, so gear nerds at shows comes up to us like, "What's this, what's that."

Bobb: Unless you take the logos off your equipment, you're endorsing someone when you put it up on the stage.

Tim: I did that with all my bass stuff, actually. My amp and cab, I took all the logos off because it's huge, and I felt weird.

Todd: And now it just says "TIM."

[laughter]

Tim: No, I really did that. People think it's a more vintage version than I have because it's missing all the emblems. "Ooooh that's a 1969!" And I'm like, "Nah, I just didn't like how it looked."

Todd: I definitely just see it as tools. Like doing construction—there are definitely tools that are better for the job, this thing will last forever and it's well made.

Tim: We didn't say any names of any makers and you didn't see anything in our liner notes like, "We wanna use this stuff!"

Todd: I think it grows with the, "Hey, we're hanging out at this party and I'm wearing my dope—fill in the blank—hoodie." Livetweeting it. Shit like that.

Tim: Well, thankfully, it hasn't come up for us. But I don't think it would be an issue if it was. I hope it wouldn't.

Todd: In the back of your mind, just remember "What would Ian MacKaye do?"

Bobb: That's how I live my life!

[laughter]

Todd: How did you guys end up on a radio show about porn?

Anthony: That was me. I bartend, one of the regulars works in the industry.

Todd: So you work in the San Fernando Valley?

Anthony: Yeah. So one of the guys works in the industry and he gave a copy of our EP to someone he knew and the guy really liked

our songs. He was guest hosting during this one week at the porn radio station and he invited us.

Garrett: Where is this porn radio station?

Todd: Is it a terrestrial radio station or...?

Anthony: It was satellite. He was like, "We'll play a couple of your songs. You'll do something weird or awkward with a couple of the other guests..." Now we have a guy from Alabama that drives trucks who likes us. That was the only thing that happened.

Garrett: Probably the most gratifying feeling ever.

Anthony: Yeah it was super weird.

Todd: Explain weird and awkward.

Anthony: It was a pseudo game show and there was like, spanking...?

Tim: Two Playmate girls and it was a truth-or-dare type thing.

Anthony: Like, barn-animal-noises.

Tim: I remember you had to like, ride a girl?

Bobb: I thought the girl rode you? I wasn't there. I only saw the pictures afterwards.

Garrett: That was more awkward than this interview, then?

Anthony: Yeah, totally. It was surprisingly uncomfortable. It was pretty much the first interview we did. It was very early in the band. It was like, "Hey, these people like your music. Come on, we're gonna play a couple songs and talk about it, great." Then you're sitting there with headphones on and locked on in a glass room and they're like, "Okay, now these girls are gonna come in and you're gonna do this stuff," and you're like, "What?" Yeah. Nothing bad. But it was a weird experience. We haven't gotten talked into anything like that since.

Anthony: We learned that lesson early.

Todd: Right, the lesson of when to say no is an important life lesson. [laughter]

Garrett: Another question. You seem pretty comfortable using social media, as a lot of younger bands tend to do.

Tim: Yeah, we try to figure out what people are looking at and how to connect with people. It's seriously just like the platforms that we're actually on as people.

Bobb: So we just figure, "Oh, I got an Instagram account. Maybe we should get one for the band."

Tim: Yeah, and then once we started using something like Instagram for the band we said, "Well, nobody's using Facebook anymore. What's next?"

Anthony: You want people to hear your stuff. Another tool.

Garrett: Another self promotion mechanism.

Anthony: We're not paying anybody to run a Twitter or anything. It's like, someone thinks of something, we all have access to it, and we all can do everything.

Tim: There's the whole Facebook paid-ads thing. Now you post something and it doesn't connect with anybody unless you pay commercially. But you use something new like Tumblr, use Instagram... Put up a picture of a flyer and suddenly that gets a couple hundred likes, whereas something on Facebook wouldn't get noticed at all.



BOTH PHOTOS EL DIABLO





IT WAS A PSEUDO GAME SHOW AND THERE WAS LIKE, SPANKING...?

Anthony: People find out about stuff and they go to shows. Facebook and Instagram are one of the main ways I find out about shows, still.

Bobb: If you think about people walking down the street, nobody is looking at a pole that has a flyer pasted to it.

Tim: They're walking around looking at their phones.

Bobb: So you have to figure out a way to get that shit on their phone. When we have big shows coming up we print flyers. But I mean, those flyers aren't getting as much eyeballs touching them as something on the internet.

Garrett: I guess flyers are a romantic notion at this point?

Bobb: JPEGs of flyers are useful.

Tim: We had a great flyer drawn up for our record release show. We got 'em printed up—full color, 12" record size, and glossy. We had them at a merch table, like, "Anybody wants these flyers, come take them. All the bands playing, come take one." I still got a stack of them. But we put the same picture on Instagram and it gets a hundred likes.

Todd: Put those as inserts on your next record—it'll fit. Extra bonus. We live in a changing world. New topic. How does a tube of cookie dough fit into your lyrics?

Tim: It's been a couple of weeks since I've been asked this question. So those parts of that song....

Todd: What song are we talking about?

Tim: "You Should Have Married a Whore." The lyrics are partly from a girl I dated a while ago and partly about a guy who is married with kids and is happy, but would complain about his life and not being happy. So it's kind of a juxtaposition of those two things. But, I started dating a girl back in Illinois. We went out twice and she cancelled on me when we were supposed to hang out and watch a movie. I'm a young punk kid with purple hair at the time, so the next time I see her she says, "Hey you're open minded, right?" [laughter]

Todd: Always say "no" to that.

Tim: She says, "You know how I haven't

SILVER STRAND RADIO

Todd: So, Anthony, let's do a little sidebar. How involved were you at KSSR with Silver Strand radio?

Anthony: Well, I got the tattoo.

Todd: It was a pirate radio station that met a quick demise.

Anthony: It was. We got the equipment from a guy who was running from the Feds. KSSR stood for Silver Strand radio, which is a part of Oxnard. The guy was worried his girlfriend was going to call the Feds on him, so he gave it to our buddy who put it up at his house, The Colonel. Right after they did that, I moved into Ventura, where it was located. I started doing a Sunday morning show after someone explained what Breakfast with The Beatles was. Apparently every Sunday for four hours. It's a syndicated thing.

Todd: Because they have no fucking material... go ahead.

Anthony: So I was like, "Well, I'm gonna do a Sunday show and I'm gonna call it Breakfast with Boothie."

Todd: And your last name is Booth.

Tim: The twist is that he only played Beatles.

Anthony: Yeah, it was really weird. It was all backwards, though.

Bobb: He'd just talk shit about The Beatles the whole time.

Anthony: Like, "Listen to this stupid song I'm gonna play." There's a good scene up in Ventura in terms of bands and artists, lots of them got involved and DJ'd shows. There were themes that covered everything.

Bobb: Everybody had really good taste in whatever they were playing.

Todd: Even the randomizer thing that played when people weren't there was pretty fuckin' good.

been able to see you, and I keep having stuff to do at night? Um, I don't work in a photo lab like I told you." She says, "Well, I'm a professional dominatrix." I didn't know that was something you could pay rent with.

Garrett: That's random she came up with "I work at a photo lab."

Anthony: She was an amateur shutterbug. [laughter]

Tim: I should have known it when she said, "Oh, the photo lab called me at eleven thirty at night, I gotta rush." I'm gullible, so I went along with it. So I asked, "What do you do at work?" She said, "Well, I never have sex with anybody. It's guys paying to have me do things to them at the dungeon." Her work was always "the dungeon"—that's what she referred to it as. So I asked her what kind of things she did, she said, "When you wanted to hang out the other night I got called in. I was just watching that session and I was paid to sit there and laugh at this guy as he was strapped down to a table while a girl put a cucumber up his ass and whipped him until he coughed and it shot out." [laughter]

Todd: Aaaand we're done.

Tim: So I was like, "Oh okay?!" and another one of the stories was when a married man called and said he wanted to come for an appointment tonight, so she said, "Okay I'll be there at eight," and he said, "No. I have to go out to dinner with my wife first," so she said, "All right, I want you to get a tube of cookie dough, stick it up your ass, go to dinner with your wife, and I want it to still be there when you come to see me later." [laughter]

Anthony: It was going really well—they were hosting benefit shows to cover the internet and electricity bill at this guy's place, and it was turning into a thing. Old Man Markley played in-studio one day before they had a show in Santa Barbara... all kinds of stuff.

The Colonel was tour managing a band and the day that he left, two hours after, the Feds and the FCC showed up, multiple unmarked cars with all kinds of paperwork saying they knew everyone's name, they knew the address, they knew the location, everything that was going wrong with it, how far over the broadcast—if we had one—we were going, all that stuff. They made his wife go in and unplug everything in the garage. You get a warning and the second time it's like, a half a million dollar fine and a minimum of a year in federal prison.

Bobb: Thank you, Michael Powell.

Todd: And I thought they really screwed with Christian Slater in *Pump up the Volume*. Now it's sad because they weren't harming anybody. Like, what an amazing amount of government resources to do this.

Anthony: It's dead air. If you go to the area and go to 89.7, there's nothing.

Bobb: The pretense is that because it's not an official quote-unquote "radio station" that it's not being properly censored. But we live in a country that supposedly has free speech, so what's the censorship?

Anthony: You can't say "bitch" from noon to four on Wednesdays or something.

Todd: It's so counterproductive.

Bobb: And we're paying millions of tax dollars to fund this.

Tim: Sorry it took so much explanation. That's what you get, though.

Anthony: Aren't you glad you asked?

Todd: I am. It explains a lot.

Tim: We stopped seeing each other shortly after.

Anthony: 'Cause she brought cookies over for dinner?

Tim: She was like, "No, that's just work. My personal life is nothing like that." But once it was out in the open, the next three times we hung out we'd go to a Halloween costume store to pick out clothes for work for her, and I couldn't do it.

Garrett: Yeah, I don't really know where to go from there.

Todd: I don't wanna bring up any harmful memories Anthony, but when's the last time you got in a fight?

Anthony: I've only been in one fight in my entire life.

Garrett: Physical fight?

Anthony: Physical fight.

Todd: Long Beach, right?

Anthony: Long Beach with, can I name drop them?

Todd: Barry? Sure go ahead.

Anthony: Barry from Joyce Manor. I was in Long Beach hanging out with some friends.

Todd: Weren't you a for-hire bartender?

Anthony: I was. We bartended together one night and all Barry did—Tim was there—was stand there and drink beer, right? So tickets are coming up and I'm like, "Well, I know how to make that, I'm a bartender," and actually working and making drinks and

the waitresses are coming over and squirting Jell-O shots into my mouth and I'm just makin' drinks. Another night there, one of Barry's friends gave a guy a cigarette and the guy said something shitty to him, so Barry's friends said something shitty to him and that guy punched that guy in the face.

Todd: Over a cigarette, that he "borrowed."

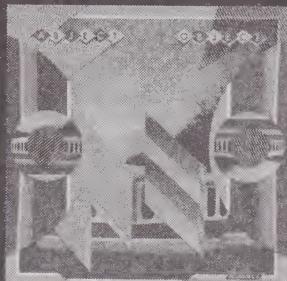
Anthony: So Barry, myself, and a couple other friends come down and his mouth's all bloody. So we walked back down to the first bar we were at. It's like four of us and two of them and we're walking towards each other. He's got his wallet chain out and he's swinging it, and I took my glasses off and handed them to a pedestrian like, "Hold these, please" 'cause I only have one pair of glasses. I felt horrible for like a week after.

Garrett: That was important. Four out of five guys in this room wear glasses. We're all like, "What'd you do with the glasses?"

Anthony: The fish taco restaurant that it happened in front of probably doesn't want me back. There was a guy sweeping and Barry's friend was just getting his ass kicked in front of this window. I have a guy by his hair and I look up. I'm like, "Oh, that poor guy" and then I remembered, "Oh, this guy is gonna kill me."

It was the first time I'd ever punched someone in the face and I kicked a guy and it was done. Once the adrenaline subsided, I felt like I had got dumped in high school. For like a week my stomach hurt and I felt really uncomfortable and mildly ashamed. I felt really weird about it and it wasn't satisfying.

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ALBUM OUT NOW

I STARTED GOING TO PUNK SHOWS AT FIRESIDE IN CHICAGO. THAT WAS THE



FIRST TIME I LISTENED TO CURRENT THINGS.

It's been four or five years now and since I've never—I'm, like, "No. You guys go over there and do that stuff."

Todd: So what you were feeling was your humanity.

Tim: I remember when you first told me on the way to practice and I was very uncomfortable and quiet 'cause we hadn't known each other that long. You guys knew him much longer. I remember suddenly thinking, "This guy gets into bar fights?"

Todd: For a band, that ends up being a liability.

Tim: Yeah, like, "Whoa! Next show are there gonna be punches thrown?"

Bobb: At any point did you guys say, "Cheese it! It's the cops!" and run away?

Anthony: The cops were coming and we all dispersed.

Bobb: I feel like we need to clarify, too, when you said it was four on two, one of those four was you, and the other one was Barry, so it was really like two and a half on two.

Tim: And just like bartending, Barry was just standing there drinking beer. [laughter]

Anthony: It was the heart... Barry kicked this guy in the face, and, granted, I played soccer for twelve years. It was the hardest kick I've ever seen in my entire life.

Garrett: I know you guys work and have jobs and all, but have you put thought into any kind of a tour?

Bobb: Funny you ask, we're supposed to be on tour right now.

Tim: No, we're supposed to be leaving next week.

Bobb: I thought it was this week?

Anthony: We're always *supposed* to be on tour.

Tim: We planned a short tour. We started planning it months ago.

Bobb: It just wasn't coming together.

Tim: We had one solid show.

Anthony: But that was in Denver, so we had to get to Denver...

Todd: Through Montreal. [laughter]

Tim: It's an odd thing being the spring. We thought it would be a good time to play. We were hearing back from bookers, people we know who wanted to help us. Some contacted us. "We saw you wanna do dates, please let me book you a show," and they came back saying, "Dates just aren't good right now. We aren't going to be able to find anything for that weekend." So we're trying to be smarter about the shows we play, because we've done the time where we're like "Yes. We'll say yes

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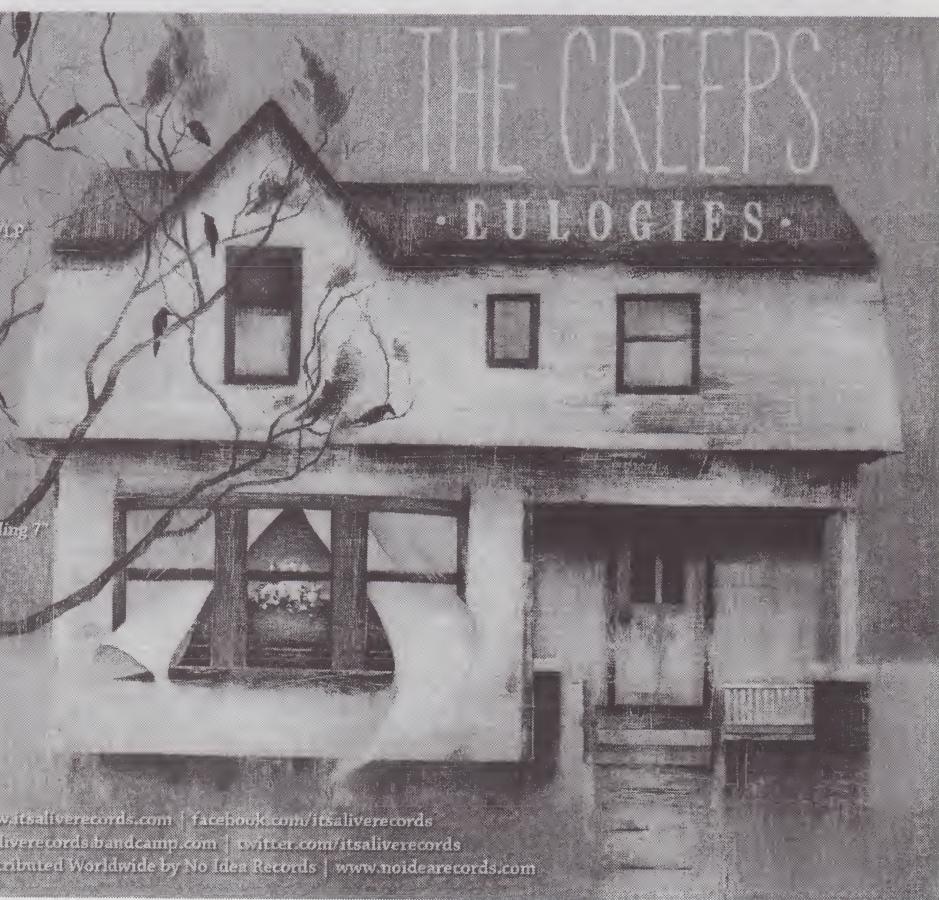
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to any show." We wanna have more good shows rather than just more shows.

Todd: Another good band lesson.

Anthony: Took us a while to figure it out. Took us four years.

Tim: Playing as much as possible is great. I think that bands have to do that, to learn what they wanna do and to help songwriting and we had to do that, but we want all the shows to be good. Yeah we do wanna tour, but being that we all work and have to pay rent and everything, we can't just jump in a van and go, "Hope it turns out okay."

Anthony: And we can only do four, five, six days at a time.

Bobb: Yeah, it's something that we all love about being in a band, 'cause playing local shows is great and everything, but seeing new cities, seeing new parts of the country—I grew up on summer vacation road trips with my family, so I get kinda itchy every six months if I'm not in a car on the way to something. So, if I'm being honest, that's my favorite part of being in a band. Recording is second, and playing on a Friday night in my hometown is third or fourth. Practice ranks above local shows.

But it's just about being smart about being a band, and that's what we're trying to do at this point. We've been a band long enough that Tim said we learned some of the hard lessons over and over and over again before we actually learned them. So saying yes to playing a show in Austin when we have no shows in between or on the way back is a bad idea. I learned that lesson in 2006 and it finally sunk in now.

Tim: I absolutely love going places and playing. We've been blessed and played a lot of great venues. Playing Gilman St. was a life goal for me. Now we pretty much get to play there whenever we call them up, and that's amazing. But we're also really lucky to have the L.A. scene, or the extended Los Angeles area. 'Cause we can play with so many different bands and great bands here and still have a decent draw somewhat weekly. I don't think you can get away with that in most cities.

Garrett: That's what I was kinda thinking like, you don't really *have* to tour per say because where you're located in Southern California. **Bobb:** And stay active. You're absolutely right because every week we could play to a completely different group of people. We're playing Fullerton coming up, none of the people in Fullerton have ever been to VLHS. And none of the people who go to VLHS will see us in L.A. Every time we go to a venue in L.A., you're gonna play to a different crowd.

Tim: We're playing two nights in a row next week, the Friday is Ventura and Saturday is Fullerton, so for us it's just a drive, but it's the same amount of different people as if we were touring.

Garrett: So that almost makes not "touring" okay.

Todd: Or takes the sting out of it.

Tim: Yeah, it takes the sting out. We want to go other places. I'm from Chicago. Do you know how badly I want our band to make it out there and play some Chicago venues and play to old friends of mine?

Bobb: Rub it in their faces!

Tim: Very badly I wanna do that!

Anthony: I guess that plays back to the question earlier about being active at social media. Because we can't get out as much as we like, we take advantage of that to reach people, and the friendships we've made through different events or life. I've made tons of friends from the various Awesome Fests who live around the country. I don't ever get see them, but that's a way for us and the band to stay in contact.

Bobb: The Cleveland connection we have with Signals Midwest and Aaron Ohio and all the people that we know that live in Cleveland who have our record. We'd probably do well there and we've never been fuckin' east of the Mississippi.

Garrett: So if you had a chance to play the Fest in Gainesville, would it be worth the vacation trip?

Tim: I've never been to the Fest. I have weird rules in life I make about things.

Todd: Give me one. Don't just gloss over that.

Tim: I'm not going to Fest or Punk Rock Bowling until I play them. [laughter]

Bobb: Anthony and I have only been to one Fest together. It was a fuckin' shit show and I loved it. At the exact same minute and second, the best and worst times of my entire life.

Tim: Was that the trip that broke your sternum?

Bobb: That was a different trip and I broke Anthony's sternum.

Anthony: Now, my sternum is fine but it's this little collarbone over here that's a little sore... still.

Bobb: I'm the man with golden bones. Nobody can break me!

Garrett: Gold is kinda soft.

Bobb: I've been a skateboarder for fifteen years and I've never broken a bone.

Todd: Knock on some wood dude, c'mon.

Bobb: I want the record to show that I am touching no wood at this moment.

Anthony: He's gonna trip on his way outta here.

Anthony: It was Fest Six. And his band went out there. I left later and they'd gotten a box of beer koozies shipped to the house. They showed up after they left so I had to fit two hundred beer koozies into my backpack. I put it through the X-ray thing and the guy kinda looked at me like, "Whaaat?"

Todd: But it was really, really light, wasn't it?

Bobb: Anthony took two hundred beer koozies and one T-shirt to the Fest. My band was out there—part of the band lesson of being smart—we drove from L.A. to St. Petersburg, Florida where we picked up our drummer at the airport.

Todd: The drummer's the smart one.

Garrett: So you drove there not doing any shows?

Bobb: No shows whatsoever.

Garrett: From California to Florida?

Bobb: Yes. So we drove from L.A. to St. Petersburg, picked up our drummer, then went to Tampa to watch the pre-Fest with our drummer, didn't play there, then went to Gainesville where we didn't have a real show at the Fest, but a house show after the Fest.

Garrett: That's way more authentic.

Bobb: Right? Fugazi again, but the problem is we were supposed to play on Saturday night. On Friday night at the same house Paint It Black played and it was a second floor apartment. So many kids went to watch Paint it Black that the floor caved in. So not only could we not play there on Saturday, but the people had to be evicted and find a new place to live.

Todd: But you said, "You still owe me money to play this," right?

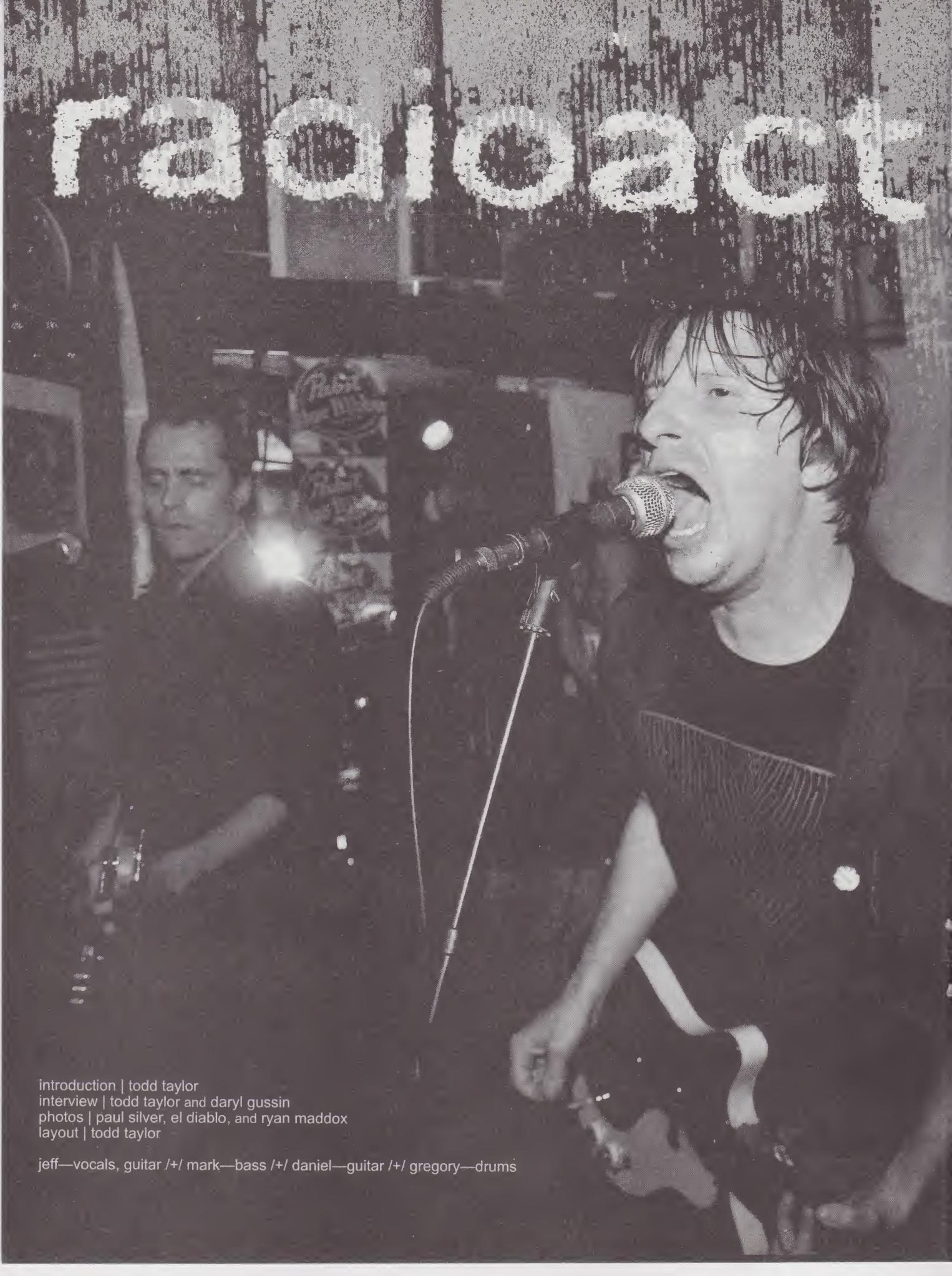
Bobb: Yeah, "You owe us like twenty five bucks and a case of Pabst, man."

Garrett: Gas money and a burrito.

Bobb: So we drove all the way to Gainesville to play a show in Austin. We were twenty-one and twenty-two. It was spring break.

Todd: Yeah, you can do that then.





introduction | todd taylor

interview | todd taylor and daryl gussin

photos | paul silver, el diablo, and ryan maddox

layout | todd taylor

jeff—vocals, guitar /+ mark—bass /+ daniel—guitar /+ gregory—drums



PAUL SILVER

How to say this without embarrassing the band? Radioactivity are, bar none, one of the world's best active punk bands. Aw, fuck that. Take out the punk qualifier. They're a unifying band in an ever-fracturing, perishable-genre-enamored world. 77-only punks. Killed By Death collector nerds. Crusters. Cool moms. Hardcore folks. They all love Radioactivity. If they don't yet, all they need to do is listen.

I live a life where the original instincts and undiluted energy of punk are still as relevant to me on a daily basis as indoor plumbing and electricity. What the Ramones monstered up and torched down hasn't ceased improving my quality of life. Not by a long shot. It's just that somewhere along the line—culturally speaking—punk got disabused, miscalculated by pandoric robot algorithms, mugged by capitalism, ruined by entrepreneurs, and flat-out made crappy over the years. I understand why once-savvy people got lost and gave up. Punk became "punk." Heavy, heavy quotation marks. I get it. Show me a popular culture punk band being broadcast and your point's amply made. Horrible shit's on the big stage. Thanks for making me sad.

So much went wrong. Is going wrong.

So today let's celebrate a simple, undeniably good thing. A great thing. Here's to Radioactivity. A band that stomps and hooks and just so happens to also be made up of true blue DIY, nice guys. Radioactivity's a band that shares punk's original DNA without being a clone and recycling tired blood. Radioactivity made punk new again—like it's got a plastic wrapper on it and you're unpeeling it for the very first time.

It hasn't all been done before. The game isn't over.

And for that fact alone, Radioactivity is amazing and well worth your consideration.

Todd: Okay guys [to Daniel and Gregory], I have to talk to Jeff and Mark for a little bit because we're going to catch up where the Marked Men left off.

Daniel: We get it. [laughter]

Todd: *Ghosts*, the last Marked Men album, was recorded. The Marked Men went on indefinite hiatus. Take us through the steps of how Radioactivity began.

Jeff: So, basically, I moved to Japan pretty much after we recorded *Ghosts* (2008). After awhile, I started writing songs over there and eventually showed them to a friend and he said, "We should play these live." That turned into The Novice, which only released one 7", but a lot of those songs that were written over there are now used for Radioactivity.

Todd: Why did the Marked Men end?

Mark: Jeff moved the day after the album was finished recording, so it's kind of hard to play when he is in Japan.

Daryl: Were you waiting until the record was recorded to move?

Jeff: No, we kind of just rushed the record to get it done before I left. I had my definite departure date and everything, so we had to get it done by then.



Todd: Was it bittersweet?

Mark: I cried a lot.

Todd: Really?

Mark: No. [laughter]

Jeff: Actually, recording that record was a lot of fun.

Mark: Yeah. I think it turned out good, regardless of the fact that it was kind of rushed.

Jeff: Just not having the time to worry about things and obsess about things too much was kind of nice. "Okay, that sounds good. Let's just move on." That was kind of fun, being able to do that for once.

Todd: Why did you go to Japan?

Jeff: I got a job over there.

Todd: Doing what?

Jeff: My job title was Coordinator For International Relations and I basically worked in an office where I did translation, mostly from Japanese to English. Sometimes they sent me to schools, like elementary

schools, to teach about American culture. I had some presentations. I led discussions with people who liked to speak English. A variety of things. I did that for four years.

Todd: How did you find the people to play with in *The Novice*?

Jeff: Actually, I didn't know that there was any kind of scene in the town I was in, which was called Mito. And I had friends that I had met through other friends in the U.S.—friends in Tokyo—that I went to visit pretty often. One day, one of my Tokyo friends said he was coming to Mito to go to a record store and to watch an in-store show. So, I went with him. When I got there, I saw just mostly records I recognized on the wall and stuff like that. I'd already been there eight months or so. It was just a huge surprise for me that I had this punk scene in my town, just down the street.

Todd: I've never been to Japan, but I imagine

it being so compressed. Something you might be interested in happens close by and you don't know about it.

Jeff: Yeah. That's pretty common, I think. I had no idea. I didn't see anybody who looked like they listened to punk walking around or anything. I walked by this record store probably a hundred times, but didn't look up to the third floor to see that it was there.

Todd: So, when *The Novice* ended and *Radioactivity* began, why did you change the name?

Jeff: I had a discussion with the members of *The Novice* in Japan about it and they would have been completely fine with me using the name *The Novice*, but I think it would have kind of seemed strange to other people in Japan because they thought of us as a group. It would have been strange to the people who had been watching us for a couple years in Japan if *The Novice* were now different



EL DIARIO

members playing in a different country.

Todd: Is there a nasty word they would call you in Japanese if you did that?

Jeff: Maybe. [laughter] I don't know the word. I don't think so. I think they'd just be disappointed, mostly.

Todd: So, Radioactivity, I don't believe is an arbitrary name. Would it have anything to do with an earthquake, a tsunami, and a nuclear reactor?

Jeff: Kind of. Mark thought of the name.

Mark: Partly, with The Novice, the artwork on that 7" that was done—the colors on it were supposed to represent the yellow for the radioactivity symbol. Who designed that?

Jeff: Jimbo, the drummer from Firestarter.

Mark: He had this concept behind it, so that sparked the idea since Jeff went through that—you were near Fukushima, right?

Jeff: Pretty close. I was about eighty miles from that facility.

Sometimes, it was just waking up from a big earthquake and not being able to go back to sleep. I would just get up and write a song.

Todd: So, if you don't mind, tell us about that day.

Jeff: Well, the first day, there was no real talk of radiation. I was at work on the twelfth floor of my office building. It was just a life-changing shake for about five or six minutes. For about a week or so in my town, we didn't have electricity or water or anything like that.

Todd: Wow. That's major.

Jeff: I couldn't really get around town very well, but I had to work a lot. In my office, we had a generator and everything, so I had electricity and a little bit of water I could use every once in awhile, so I was better off than most people.

Todd: How did it affect you musically?

Jeff: At first, it kind of made me forget about music totally; for several months, probably. I didn't pick up a guitar or think about music for at least a couple months afterwards because I was just busy doing other things. My job had been really busy because my translation duties had been changed to translating about the levels of radiation in various places.

At first, I had to help run an English hotline to support other foreigners in the region. It was really, really busy for awhile. But once I did start playing again, I didn't really notice any sort of change in writing, but I did start using an acoustic guitar more often, which was kind of unusual for me. Eventually, some of the content, the kind of things I sang about, changed a little bit. The circumstances in which I wrote songs were a little bit different. Sometimes, it was just waking up from a big earthquake and not being able to go back to sleep. I would just get up and write a song. We had quite a few aftershocks for the first year.

Mark: Didn't you have to sleep with a bag next to the bed?

Todd: Like a bug-out bag?

Jeff: I did. I had everything I'd needed right next to me. I slept with all my clothes on and stuff like that for awhile. For a couple weeks. A lot of the buildings in my neighborhood didn't do so well and I didn't really trust my building, either, so I thought I might have to escape quickly.

Daryl: Crazy.

Jeff: So I was prepared at all times. Any time the shaking started, no matter how long I'd been asleep or what time it was, I was up in less than a second, ready to run if I needed to.

Todd: Did that motivate you to come back to Texas?

Jeff: No. Not at all. What it did was, it made me think about what I'd rather be spending

my time doing. I didn't feel like I was well-suited to be a translator and I knew I wasn't that good at language in general, so I didn't think I should really be doing translation as my main job. I just wanted to come back and try to focus a little more on music and my brother also had a kid. That was a big factor for coming back.

Todd: Oh, cool. Mark had a kid?

Jeff: Yeah. He doesn't have any other family in that area.

Daryl: So that brings us to where we are today. I have a question for Mark and Jeff. Did either of you have the George Hurley haircut when you were teenagers?

Mark: I don't know.

Jeff: I don't know, either.

Daryl: Because Todd had it. He told me.

Todd: The cut where it's really long on one side and shaved underneath.

Daniel: Like the Tony Hawk?

Todd: Watch your mouth. [laughter] It was longer and pre-dated Tony Hawk.

Daniel: I don't know who George Hurley is.

Todd: The drummer for the Minutemen.

Jeff: I don't think I ever did that. I had really long bangs and shorter in the back at one point, but no, never.

Daryl: Good to know. This next question is more about the beginnings of Radioactivity. Were you ever afraid that people would only want to hear Marked Men songs?

Mark: Actually, it's funny you should say that because when we were in Tucson, after we were finished playing, there was a group of people, they kept saying "Fix My Brain" (A Marked Men song off the album of the same title.) over and over and chanting that.

Jeff: It's an issue.

Mark: Sometimes. In Europe, they wanted us to play Marked Men songs and we played a couple. There are certain places that said they wouldn't book us...

Jeff: We couldn't get many shows in Spain, so we had to cancel the Spanish part because we wouldn't promise to play Marked Men songs.

Daryl: Wow.

Mark: I didn't really want to do that anyway. **Gregory:** It wasn't the band. I don't know why they wanted us to play those songs. It's not the same guys. Well, it's two of the same guys, but the other two weren't there.

Mark: I think it was weird for the other guys in the band to do that. (Radioactivity has some rotating members.) I don't think they really liked it.

Gregory: I was just really stressed out about it, trying not to mess it up.

Daryl: Did you play "Fix My Brain" in Tucson the other night?

All: No.

Daniel: Hell no.

Jeff: We always get contacted by people who want the Marked Men to do a show here or there, but lately, we've been getting a lot more for Radioactivity and Mind Spiders as well. It's nice when the first question is not, "Can the Marked Men do it, and if not, can your other bands?"

Todd: Sliding scale. "We'll pay you less." So, two questions. Why is Mark playing bass and how do these two guys, Daniel and Gregory, come into the fold?

Daniel: Have you heard Mark play bass? [laughter]

Mark: It was Jeff's idea because if I played guitar then it would be too much like the Marked Men. And I like playing bass.

Jeff: He's a really solid bass player.

Todd: Why aren't you playing drums then, Jeff?

Daniel: Have you seen Greg play drums?

Gregory: Tonight's show is going to be all mixed up.

Todd: It's a hootenanny.

Jeff: Greg's actually a pretty good bass player, too.

Mark: I'm the most replaceable.

Daniel: I thought I was the most replaceable.

Gregory: I thought you were the most replaceable, too.

Todd: Daniel and Gregory, you two are no slouches. You guys come from a huge list of bands. Are you both from Denton?

Gregory: As musicians. No one's *from* Denton. Everyone moves there for college.

Todd: Just for people's edification, what other bands are you in or have been in?

Daniel: Basically, all the bands we've both been in: Bad Sports, VIDEO, Wax Museums, Mind Spiders. He's in Wiccans as well. We've been in a bunch of other different bands.

Gregory: And High Tension Wires at one point.

Todd: Are you guys a package deal?

Daniel: It seems that way.

Gregory: Sort of.

Daniel: Yes and no. He's like one of the only two drummers in town. The other's Mike Throneberry. Mike has a kid. Greg doesn't have a kid, that we know of. [laughter] I can drive at night because I don't drink. That's my main qualification.

Todd: So, pretend that Mark and Jeff aren't here. How did you feel about being asked to be in Radioactivity?

Daniel: Oh, this band is easy because we've already been in other bands with them. The first band I was asked to be in was High Tension Wires and I thought that was cool. Actually, I take that back. The first band I was in was in The Gash with Jo Jo (Joe Ayoub, Marked Men, Low Culture). We only did one 7".

Todd: Don't say *only*. One great 7".

Daniel: Well, we did half of a great 7". It was a split. That was the band that when they asked me, I was like, "Oh, that's kind of surprising. I wasn't thinking that." Especially because

they asked me to play guitar and I'm terrible at guitar. Instead of playing bass, which is my main instrument. Jeff was playing drums at the time and then when he moved, we got Greg in the High Tension Wires. So, then it's been like, every other band, we keep getting asked and such.

Todd: And you keep on saying yes.

Gregory: I think I weasled my way in a little bit at the grocery store.

Jeff: I'm pretty sure I asked you. [After some discussion, Greg was asked to join the band after running into Jeff at the grocery store.]

Daniel: "Have two sticks. Will play."

Mark: It's cool. It makes it that much more different for me, playing bass, and these guys—because Radioactivity, even though it's definitely Jeff's songs and his style, it definitely has a different feel than Marked Men and I think it makes a big difference.

Todd: As a person who has listened to the Marked Men for years and years—Potential Johns, High Tension Wires, Chop-Sakis, the list goes on and on—I definitely see them as projects that are changing and evolving, even though I don't know exactly who all the personnel are. They all have a different feel to them. Radioactivity definitely feels different than Potential Johns, and Jeff wrote all the songs for both. There's a different approach.

Daniel: Less Spanish guitar. [laughter] Slightly.

Todd: So, tell me a little bit about the self-titled LP's cover. Where's that image from?

Mark: I found it in an old yearbook from Fort Worth College from 1951. This guy almost gave them to us at this garage sale. I was just looking for images. I didn't know what to use, exactly.

Todd: And where did the song title, "Don't Try" come from?

Mark: The lyrics. [laughter]

Todd: Let me rephrase. Where did the lyrics come from?

Mark: Sorry.

Todd: No, it's good. We just have to go down the rabbit hole with him.

Jeff: I'm not sure how much I can or will go into that. It's basically about a relationship that didn't work out.

Todd: Do you know who has "Don't Try" on their tombstone?

Jeff: No.

Todd: Charles Bukowski. [Points to a grave rubbing in HQ.] It says "Don't Try" really lightly above the image of the boxer.

Jeff and Mark: I didn't know that.

Daniel: I didn't know you guys were so literary.

Daryl: And a drunk. [laughter]

Todd: That was my line of questioning. I didn't know if that was an homage.

Jeff: No, actually I didn't know about that.

Mark: Do you like Charles Bukowski?

Jeff: I actually haven't read any.

Todd: How many records were used in the shooting of the video for "Don't Try"?

Mark: It's on the video. It was like three thousand something.

Todd: They gave the number?

Daniel: It's in the description.

Jeff: At least three thousand something. (2,667 photos of 3,300+ records.)

Todd: I saw how long it took to shoot it and then it was all the records in your brother's store Mad World Records, except these stacks on the ground.

Jeff: Our friend Dave, who works at the store, basically mentioned the idea of it to me, but I didn't know he was actually going to do it. We were in Europe and got a message saying something like, "Hey, we shot this. Take a look."

Todd: That was my next question. Did he get the band to pull every record and take a picture?

Jeff: Dave and our friend Eric, from a band called Fishboy, in Denton as well—they just did it together one day because Dave had the day off.

Daryl: Why not.

Daniel: Dave had the day off, yet he still came in to work.

Gregory: Probably worked harder than he usually does.

Jeff: Something like fourteen hours.

Daryl: Have you ever tried to make sense of the Marked Men and Radioactivity's cross-over appeal? Because I've heard people who don't listen to melodic subgenres of punk be really enthusiastic about these bands. Have you ever tried to really think about where that comes from?

Gregory: Yeah, my mom likes Marked Men.

Todd: Moms like Marked Men.

Mark: We're nice boys.

Todd: Even the music of the Marked Men.

Jeff: I was thinking, when you said crossover, I was thinking more along the lines of...

Daryl: Thrashmetal.

Jeff: When we go to Sweden, a lot of people in hardcore bands will come to see us.

Daniel: All the Chaos In Tejas bands.

Jeff: When I talked to someone there, they said, "When we were growing up, we listened to old punk, like '70s punk," and I guess it reminds them of that in some way. But, yeah. I don't know about for the other side.

Mark: We all like pop music, mostly. That's basically what it is. It's what everybody listens to. I don't know.

Todd: So, in sum, you have no idea, do you? [laughter]

Jeff: I wondered the same thing. It doesn't make much sense.

Mark: I'm constantly surprised... that people like the band so much. It's awesome.

Daryl: That's what I was wondering. I'd like to bring it back to high quality songwriting. You can't argue with it. These are just well-crafted songs. But does it ever go to anything other than that?

Mark: I don't know.

Jeff: I don't know, either.

Daniel: They put in the work, I think. Especially the Marked Men. They were a band for ten years.

Daryl: Non-stop touring.

Daniel: As far as that band's popularity—'cause I saw it just as being a dude in town who would always see them—Jeff moved to Japan. Then word of mouth got out and then

Q: Have you ever tried to make sense of the Marked Men and Radioactivity's cross-over appeal?

A: I wondered the same thing. It doesn't make much sense.

when he came back for the first time, it was just like, bam. People were at shows all the time. It took awhile for it to snowball.

Todd: People are stupid. [laughter]

Daniel: Definitely.

Todd: And it takes a long time for people to clue into something. And they want something dead first, then "I wish these guys came back." It's a lot easier that way. It's conspicuous. I saw Marked Men several times in Pedro and L.A. "Why aren't ten times more people here?" It was well-attended, but people are missing out. I feel that way with a handful of bands happening now.

Mark: I think it's just persistence because we've been doing it for so long. Over time, we just keep having albums come out. They're associated with each other. After awhile, people start finally recognizing it, I guess.

Gregory: It seems like now, too, there's more of a presence in certain press outlets. At least, that's how it seemed to me because I remember being fifteen, sixteen and seeing Marked Men and not being able to find anything on them. But now, you type their name into a search and a bunch of stuff pops up.

Daniel: Not just the gay porno.

Todd: And how old are you now?

Gregory: Twenty-six. This was ten years ago.

Todd: I do have a theory, though. Having been around for such a long time, that it almost becomes a musical family affair. Jeff—I wasn't in the room when this happened—I can swear that Ken Dirtnap said after the Marked Men broke up, "What you guys do, from here until you die, I'll put out your music."

Mark: Yeah, he kind of had an open invitation, to some degree.

Daniel: To all four people.

Gregory: Watch out for the Mike Throneberry solo record.

Jeff: That's what he's been recording. [laughter]

Mark: He's been working on something.

Daryl: Joe's glam record.

Todd: His post-oi record.

Mark: Joe does have a new band called Hot Man. He's had that name for a long time.

Todd: That's got to be helpful. You know what you record—because you've reached a certain level of quality and expectation—that someone's going to put it out.

Mark: I want to see how far I can push it.

Todd: Start slow. Start slow.

Mark: This is our one-sided jam, a Hawkwind kind of thing and see if Ken'll put it out.

Todd: Hawkwind, yes. Yes (the band), no. No Asia. No *Tarkus* armadillos... Jeff, you started out a drummer and your brother did different instruments and you had band names that were named colon, toothpicks (: toothpicks), colon, whatever.

Jeff: Yeah, in high school, we had a band that we changed the name at every show.

Todd: Like the Butthole Surfers used to do.

Jeff: It wasn't serious or anything, but it was fun enough.

Todd: Serious enough for somebody to video it.

Jeff: [hesitantly] Yeah.

Mark: It doesn't exist. Don't look for it.

Todd: It's this thing called the Internet and you type in "Jeff Burke, not gay porn" or "not real estate agent," and it will come up.

Jeff: I think my first band was when I was twelve. I'd just started playing guitar and my brother was the singer. We played in that band for a couple of years. I played with him since I started playing music. Then he played bass in the Chop-Sakis. He's helped with some design. He did a little bit for one Reds 7". He did the design for the Potential Johns releases.

Mark: No, I did that one.

Jeff: Okay. I may be wrong about that. Also, he has his own record store.

Mark: Oh, he did help me out with that. You're right.

Jeff: I know.

Mark: I'm sorry.

Jeff: A lot of the younger people, I think, found out about some of our bands just from going into his store and stuff like that.

Todd: I think that record stores can be underappreciated. It's nice to randomly look through music that's been curated by the owner.

Daryl: Why is Denny's the Jeff Burke restaurant of choice?

Jeff: [looks quizzical] I can't remember the last time I went to Denny's.

Mark: I thought it was Waffle House. He likes Waffle House a lot.

Jeff: Where does the question come from? I used to go a lot when I was young.

Daryl: This was a month ago. You told me you only leave the house to go to Denny's.

Jeff: Oh, I think I said Denton.

Daryl: Ohhh. [laughter] I was like, "Huh. Denny's. All right."

Jeff: I was trying to describe there was just nothing in my town and there was no reason to leave my property unless I had to go to Denton.

Daryl: Makes sense.

Gregory: That cleared that up.

Daniel: I wish Denny's was the slang for "Denton."

Jeff: I need to pronounce things a little more clearly, I think.

Mark: You mumble a lot.

Jeff: I know I do.

Todd: I think another thing that helps define the Marked Men and Radioactivity is that there's a code of ethics of what you guys do and will not do. You're in a hot basement at four or five on a Friday (Razorcake HQ). You guys played the Trainyard, an all-ages space in Las Cruces. As far as I know, you don't have a publicity person booking this tour for you. You're playing VLHS in Pomona tonight. Why, this far along, are you doing that?

Mark: That's a good question. [laughter]

Daniel: That's all we know.

Jeff: Well, the Marked Men, we just had great luck just doing everything with friends and people we met along the way.

Mark: I've had experiences playing in other bands where there are official booking agents and stuff like that, which is fine. There are good things about that. When you go to Europe, it's all booked up and stuff.

Todd: With different languages, I get that.

Mark: But, for the most part, you don't

have to. There's no reason to. You've got to give somebody a cut of what you make to do that. At this point, there's no point and no reason for us to do that. We'll be able to go on tour and do well without having to deal with booking agents. We trust a lot of the people who we've met over the years in these different towns. We play in Tucson. We know Isaac Reyes (Lenguas Largas, Shark Pants, Swing Ding Amigos). Had a great time hanging out with them. Why would we not do that?

Todd: Because a lot of bands don't do that. There's a lot of temptation. Or people will promise things like a six hundred dollar guarantee or whatever.

Mark: Yeah, but it seems like when you do that, you might have a bigger cut, but, at the same time, you add on all these extraneous things for the band that you're having to deal with. A lot of things start to be out of your control and that's the part I don't like. You're booking stuff with people you don't know anything about. They might offer you whatever, but the show will probably suck. So, why would you want to do that?

Jeff: And you never know, depending on who the booking agent is, if they would offend somebody, cause problems for the band.

Todd: Daniel and Gregory, how about you guys?

Gregory: I've never booked a thing in my life. I just go. But I went on tour with a band a while ago and there were a lot of booking agents and a tour manager. It's nice, but the things you get out of it, the benefits, it's not really that big of a deal. You're going to be sitting in a van for hours on end, either way. It doesn't really matter. This way's better, I think, because you get to see your friends, no matter what. You get to meet a lot of cool people this way. While, the other way, you could easily end up spending the entire night by yourself.

Todd: Kind of like being in a bubble.

Daniel: I spent the entire last summer on tour with a bad booking agent, with another band, and, just, yeah, it's kind of bad wherever you go. "Oh, why are we playing this place? I know the cool places in town. I know the cool bands in town. Why did someone get paid to do something that I could have done in ten minutes?" As far as us and our bands, no one's ever offered us booking. We're not opposed to it. You have to look at the pros and cons of everything. Especially these guys and us, we've all been doing this long enough to where we've made plenty of contacts. The only problem with doing it that way is that, over the years, your contacts might move on. You're booking with guys who, even when they first start out, are twenty-five. They get married and have kids. Then you don't know who to book with.

Todd: You play their kids' birthdays.

Daniel: Get 'em while they're young. Their allowance money.

Todd: Has anybody offered you a gross amount of money for your music that you deeply considered?

Mark: The Marked Men, towards the end,



EL DIABLO

Jeff: I need to pronounce things a little more clearly, I think.

Mark: You mumble a lot.

Jeff: I know I do.

had some stuff going on that was interesting. But we knew that Jeff was moving and there just wasn't any point doing that.

Jeff: There was actually no talk of money, either.

Mark: It wasn't like any figures were being thrown around.

Todd: Going back to what Daryl brought up about how you guys are appreciated by such a wide swath of different types of punk rockers, what is one thing you won't allow your instrument to sound like?

Jeff: For me, I'm always open to trying stuff I haven't done before. But, every time I try something new, it just doesn't sound right and I just end up going back to what I'm used to.

Todd: That's helpful.

Mark: I don't have something I'm totally against, exactly. I used to hate wah pedals, but Daniel turned me back on to them.

Daniel: I'm all about trying to find the stupidest thing you can do, and then use it, and try and make it cool. My new thing is I want to get one of those whammy pedals, like Pantera used. I think that'd probably be really cool.

Todd: Don't they have whammy bars, too?

Daniel: They have both. The squeelies with the bar.

Mark: What if you put a whammy bar and a whammy pedal together?

Daryl: It just flattens out. Nothing. [laughter]

Daniel: As far as guitar, I'm all for whatever. But, for bass, I hate that really pingy bass sound. That Rancid, Matt Freeman bass. I hate that. I use flatwounds on my bass, so it's nice and it smooths out. Sounds like the Jackson Five.

Jeff: He's still working on the slap.

Gregory: I don't tune the snare high. I don't like it when it makes that "piiiing" sound. I hate that, so I always tune mine really low and dampen them. Which, I guess, when you're playing live, you're sort of working against yourself because it's quieter, but I think it sounds so much better.

Daryl: There's less bounce.

Gregory: Yeah, there's less bounce. I think it sounds better when it's in the middle area. Also, I don't play half notes, usually. Ninety percent of the time, I don't play half on the hi-hat 'cause I think that's just lazy. It sounds so much better when you're playing the full sixteen notes. I mean, I do sometimes. Don't get me wrong. It's appropriate in certain situations.

Daniel: Especially if you do that, it always seems like it drags a little bit.

Gregory: When you full-on do the thing, it makes it more intense.

Daniel: Even if the song's slower. It makes it pick up a lot.

Todd: Again, pretend Mark and Jeff aren't here. Have they asked you do something you didn't want to do, but you just did it anyway?

Gregory: ...well, we were in the bathroom... [laughter]

Todd: Musically.

Gregory: No, because when we recorded, a lot of the times, I don't even know the songs prior to recording. Jeff just shows me the songs and tells me what to do. And not in a mean way. Very polite way. We'll talk it over and say, "What if I did this?" if I had an idea. Usually, it ends up being what he told me in the first place. [laughter] Which I don't mind because I totally get when you're writing your own songs. He plays every instrument, so he knows what he wants. So, I usually don't have a problem.

There's one song we just recorded—it's not that I didn't want to play the drum beat that way—it's just that I don't usually play that way and it was hard. It took us more than a couple tries to record it because it was a drum beat from a pre-set keyboard thing.

Mark: Those old keyboards have weird drum patterns. Jeff wrote songs to that drum pattern on that and he wanted that same beat. You're hitting the bass drum and snare at the same time. It doesn't make sense.

Gregory: It was a little tricky, but I've never done anything I didn't want to, against my



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will. It's not like Jeff's, "You're going to play it this way or you're out."

Daniel: Like he's a total slave driver. With a whip.

Daryl: Jeff, can you tell us of a musical misadventure you recently tried and failed and went back on?

Jeff: I probably have a lot of them. I did one really stupid one recently. We were recording the second Radioactivity album.

Mark: [laughs] The button. We forgot to push the button.

Jeff: That's another one.

Mark: On the tape machine.

Jeff: We recorded the whole thing once and then it was on the wrong speed. The machine was in a different room than us. I was just using a remote and didn't know that it was on the wrong speed.

Mark: It'd be more tape hiss. Tape goes slower and then it wouldn't sound as good.

Jeff: And then a few weeks ago, I spent four or five hours just adding backwards things to this one song that I ended up not using... and I accidentally recorded over the snare drum. [laughter]

Daniel: Did you try to do the reverse reverb thing?

Jeff: Similar type of thing, but I was trying to add layers. And, yeah. It was pretty ridiculous. Once I turned the tape back over, I was like, "This is not going to work. I wasted four hours." [laughs to himself]

Daryl: You can interpret this however you want, but what's the most political thing you've ever done?

Gregory: Voted. Once.

Todd: I thought you said you farted.

Gregory: That, too.

Daniel: He's done that well more than once.

Jeff: I'm not sure if I have a good answer for that one. I can't think of anything.

Todd: Nothing comes out from the Vomit Punks days?

Daryl: I'm thinking that Denton's probably different from the rest of Texas.

Daniel: Sort of.

Daryl: But I think to exist in a climate like that with a different mindset, you have to do certain things, especially if you're playing punk music. Does that lead anywhere?

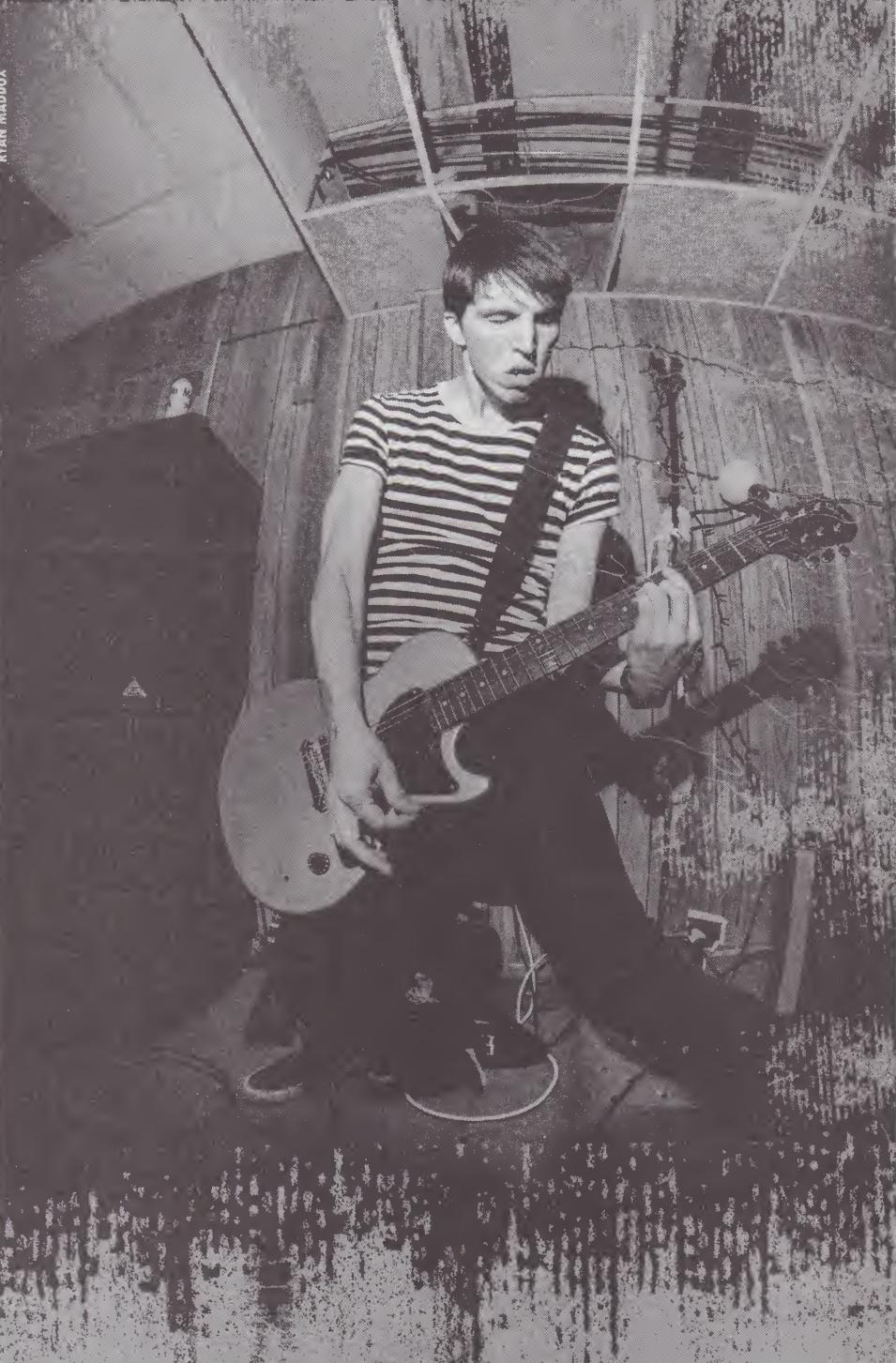
Mark: Not really, because it's just so separate. Fort Worth, where I live, is super, super, super conservative but I don't know any of those people. That whole punk scene in Denton, it's just a completely different world.

Gregory: You can avoid living in Texas while living in Texas is how I look at it. You don't have to associate with those people. The punk scene in Denton and the north Texas area is very liberal, unlike the other parts of Texas. You do feel cut off.

Daniel: It's not like Austin, where it's kind of pervasive in everything that's around, as far as punk and the music scene in general. Denton can be its own little thing. It only exists at ten o'clock at night. It doesn't necessarily have to be all around all the time, unless you work in the record store.

Mark: Living there, thinking about being politically active in any way, it just seems

RYAN MADDOX



Daniel: I'm all about trying to find the stupidest thing you can do and then use it and try and make it cool.

completely pointless because you're in such in the minority—at least I feel like I am—I don't want to get involved in any of that. I just want to stay the fuck away from those people. I guess that's why I can't really come up with an answer for that.

Jeff: And, as far as music goes, growing up in

Connecticut, everything was more political, especially with the music scene, the punk scene. And it seemed like, yeah, first was the idea and music came second for most of the bands that I grew up with. Texas is very different and I don't think it's that the people don't have the same kind of punk beliefs or



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whatever, but it's just not mixed in with the music quite as much, lyrically, thematically.

Mark: It's not really an issue for us.

Daniel: That's a surefire way, in my opinion, to really date yourself. Things can change over time, especially if you add too much political beliefs in your music. Over the years, think of the Reagan bands. Sounds dated.

Todd: You have to be really careful about your topicality.

Daniel: There's a difference between personal politics and politics politics. Political politics. [laughter]

Todd: Is that what that's called?

Daniel: Yeah. I went to college for seven years. [laughter]

Daryl: What do you think is important about still going to house shows in your town?

Daniel: Do they exist?

Jeff: It's a lot harder to go to house shows now because we're so much older than everybody else at the house shows and it does feel a little awkward sometimes.

Todd: Like pedo awkward?

Mark: Not quite.

Jeff: I feel pretty out of place. I'm glad that house shows are still going on, and if somebody is coming through town that I would like to support, I definitely want to go see them.

Mark: They do, but it seems like it's kind of inconsistent. There'll be a house for a little while, then it'll just stop. In college towns, I guess that's just the way it is.

Daniel: Every couple years, there are more houses at certain times. Then it'll be clubs for a little while, then houses for a little while. It goes back and forth. Right now, I think houses are getting more popular.

Jeff: They are in Denton right now, yeah. There are quite a few house shows these days.

Daniel: Say six years ago, there were five or six houses that were all doing stuff all at once. We even had this thing—it was before South By Southwest—it was House By House Fest. Four or five different houses. All the bands that were coming through, they all played ten-band bills at each of these houses. It worked out pretty well, but now it doesn't exist. Well, it kinda worked well.

Jeff: Not just house shows, but there are other spaces that you can use that you don't have to worry about, like a club taking so much money that the touring band can't get paid gas money. That's one reason that I hope house shows always continue because people are directly supporting the band that they want to support. The band gets all of the money.

Mark: It's hard for us sometimes because we were talking about the contacts that we've made in other places, when they're coming through town and they want us to help them with a show, we do, but it seems like we can never quite help them as much as they helped us because of the way Denton is and how sporadically good and bad it is. Sometimes, it's, "I know we had a great show in your town, but it sucks here right now."

Daniel: A lot of times, depending on what time

it is, you can just say, "Yeah, you're better off going elsewhere." Sometimes you can get a really good show, but other times, you don't want to waste the gas here and there.

Gregory: Denton's always been like that, though. Peaks and really shitty. I'd say it's on the rise right now, again. There's still a pretty good scene, I think. And there's J & J's, even though it's not a house, there's a really good venue for bands to play.

Mark: It's pretty much a house show. It's a pizza place that has a basement.

Daniel: Just a disclaimer. None of us live in Denton right now.

Jeff: We're still a Denton band, though.

Daniel: We can't escape it. It's like doing porn. Once you do it once, you can't ever escape.

Mark: That's a weird analogy.

Daryl: This question may involve some deep thinking, for better or worse.

Everyone: [sighs]

Daryl: Imagine yourself saying this sentence: "If I'd never heard that record, I probably wouldn't be here right now." What's the first record that came into your mind?

Gregory: Marked Men.

Daryl: Somehow, I knew you were going to say that.

Gregory: Oh, yeah. His brother's old store in Carrollton, where I went to high school, that's where I got those first CDs, and that's how I first found out about the whole Denton thing, started going to shows there. Sorry, I wanted to get that in there first because my answer is so easy.

Daniel: Mine's The Ramones, *It's Alive*. Had that when I was twelve, especially because that's like a greatest hits of the first three albums played faster. There's no going back from there.

Mark: I think for me, I don't think it's an album that first got me into punk, but later on, Teengenerate's *Get Action!* album. When the Reds started, that kind of stuff was my favorite. That band, probably for me.

Todd: What a great band.

Jeff: It's hard for me to pick a record, too. But I could pick points in my life which pointed me in a certain direction. When I was a kid, it was probably The Pist from Connecticut.

Todd: Very political band.

Jeff: They were the older guys in town and they were great role models for the younger punks. Then seeing Teengenerate live in 1995 changed what I wanted to do with music. There are others along the way, as well, but I can't think of just one record at the moment. I bet there is.

Todd: Fuckboyz or Hickey?

Jeff: Well, there's one song. "I Hope There Aren't Any Squares at My Funeral."

Mark: For the Potential Johns.

Jeff: For sure, that song. Yeah, I was at a weird point musically. I was tired of pop punk and tired of hardcore and didn't know what I was looking for. And that song—"Hey, what's this?" It was something new to me, so it was pretty big at the time. And, also, later on, seeing when The Reds did our first tour

with the Chop-Sakis, we played with The Lost Sounds. It was their second or third show ever. And seeing them gave me a huge boost as well.

Todd: Fuckin' awesome. They were really great live.

Jeff: And just hanging out with them. Playing us their early demos, talking about recording. It got us motivated again, at least at some level.

Daniel: That's definitely the band that helped shape a lot of people, the way they view live shows because they were so ferocious and constantly going song to song.

Todd: A lot of inter-band tension in that band, too.

Jeff: Quite a bit, yeah.

Todd: This is a direct quote from Mark from ten years ago. "When was the last show that you felt like a little girl at a Beatles concert?" Let's put it another way. When was the last time you went to a show and just got pantsed? You weren't expecting it to be as good as it is.

Daniel: Devo, the first time that I saw them. By far, the best band I've ever seen in my life. When they started playing "Gut Feeling"—chills all up and down my body. Out of this world sort of thing.

Mark: I really liked seeing Lenguas Largas the other night. That was awesome. I enjoyed that.

Jeff: I've only seen them twice, but both times it's been more than impressive. Really something else.

Todd: Such a good band. Mark and I were talking about them upstairs. If attractive dudes and a pretty girl were in that band... I love Mark Beef and he's the heart...

Daniel: Mark could still be in the band, but you've got to have the hot girls to market it.

Mark: They're the strangest looking band ever. It's awesome.

Daniel: Mark Beef adds a tough credibility.

Gregory: I'm trying to think. There's so much going on in my head right now. I saw Devo with him. It was one of the best.

Todd: I saw Devo three or four years ago at a race track and they killed it.

Gregory: Oh, in L.A.?

Todd: Yeah.

Gregory: We were there, too. We were on tour and we had a day off. "Oh, let's go to San Francisco" and someone's like, "Hey, you know Devo's playing tonight." I was like, "Yeah, it's going to be twenty, thirty bucks."

Todd: Eight bucks.

Gregory: "Eight bucks? Are you kidding me? All right."

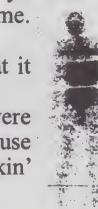
Daniel: That was the second time we saw them. We saw them the year before in Austin.

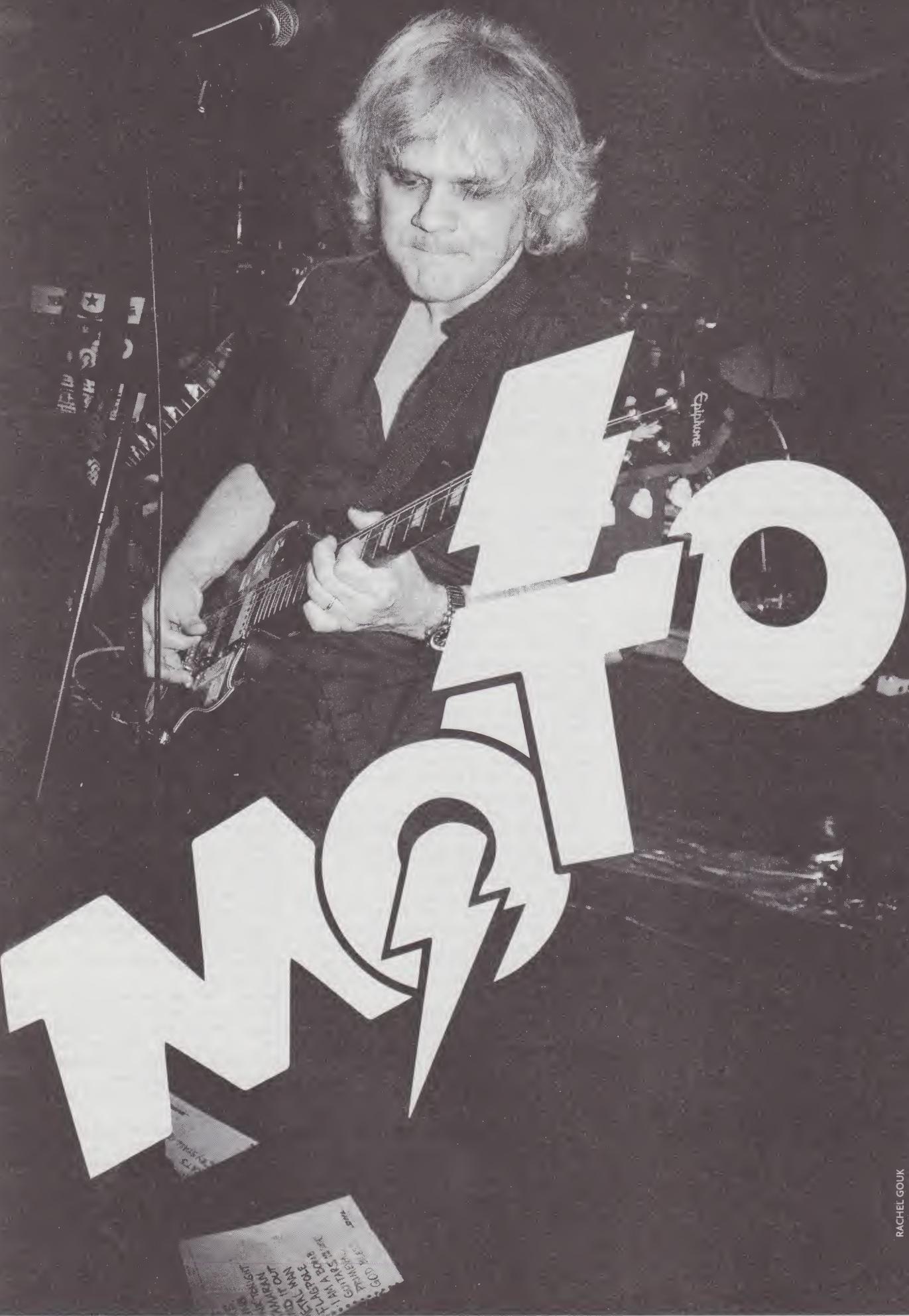
Mark: Protex were great. I really enjoyed that. I'm just such a big fan. They were a little sloppy, but it was still awesome.

I was so happy to see them.

Jeff: Their songs are so good that it didn't matter.

Mark: It didn't matter that they were sloppy. It didn't matter at all, 'cause the songs are so great. It was fuckin' really fun.





Interview by Scott Bass (with special thanks to Jason Ross for the assist)

Photos by Jack Callaghan, Rachel Gouk and Ron Rudy

Layout by Lauren Measure

In the early '90s I had a web radio show specializing in "classic" punk rock and related genres. At the time, I thought I was doing a reasonably decent job of programming a mix of genre classics and obscure underground tracks. I thought I was quite the punk rock smarty pants. So it was a bit of a surprise when my buddy Jason Rerun sent me *Single File (Mind Of A Child, 1996)*, a CD that compiled a steady stream—and

I'm sure the title was a reference to The Buzzcocks' *Singles Going Steady*—of kick-ass, low-fi, catchy-as-hell 7"s that had been released over the previous eight years. There was not a bad tune in the bunch and just squirming with earworms. I was in shock. How could I have never heard of this band? I was hooked and they quickly went into regular rotation.

Since then, a number of labels

Scott: When exactly did M.O.T.O. start?

Paul: We got started around late '81 in New Orleans. It was me, Mike Tomeny, his younger brother Jeff, and Donald Ward. Two guitars, bass, drums, and we all sang. We were friends, and still are, and we liked music so we decided to form a band for fun. We made up some songs, made some home recordings, and played some gigs. Then I got this goofy idea that I wanted to do this for the rest of my life. I don't think I was the leader, but I made up a lot of the songs. I was just ambitious enough to get into trouble.

Scott: Was it M.O.T.O. from the start, or did you use the full Masters Of The Obvious name?

Paul: We had a few silly names before we decided on Masters Of The Obvious. We called ourselves The Cremasters, Flight 759, Marshall Snooze, The Verm. I thought it'd be good to use M.O.T.O. as a shorter name because we got mis-billed as Masters Of Oblivion once, which I guess is actually a cool-sounding name....

Scott: Did the band gig much in the early days?

Paul: We played a number of gigs—not a lot, but just enough to remind people that we existed.

Scott: What kind of bands did you play with?

Paul: We pretty much played on bills with other New Orleans-area bands, although we did play with Flaming Lips on their first tour—they were just a trio then and they sounded like Blue Cheer.

Scott: Why did you start recording by yourself on a 4-track when you had a full band?

Paul: We went through some long periods where we couldn't get together very often. Jeff went to college at LSU and the rest of us had jobs and were really busy with other things. My father was sick with cancer at this time, so things were a bit hard. But I was writing songs at a good rate, and since the band couldn't get together that often, I got a cassette 4-track and recorded the songs myself to show to the others whenever we could get together.

can lay claim to releases, recorded in various countries with all sorts of lineups that ooze that unmistakable M.O.T.O. vibe. The band's sound has remained ironically consistent despite the many lineup changes and homebases over the years.

This interview with founding—and only consistent—member Paul Caporino and bass player/new wife J.V. McDonough was conducted in February 2014.

Scott: Was the rest of the band pissed that you recorded and released cassettes without them?

Paul: The other guys didn't seem to mind that they weren't on those particular recordings. I didn't think I was going to release them at the time. I just wanted to get my songs down on tape. It was fun. And I learned a little about recording as I went along.

Scott: How were the cassettes received at first—by local fans of the band and by reviewers who knew nothing of the band?

Paul: Various friends, who heard the tapes, liked the songs, and one friend suggested that I send a copy to *Maximum Rock'n'roll* magazine. So I did. I wrote that the tape was by Masters Of The Obvious so that they'd review it, thinking it was a band and we could get some publicity, even though the whole band didn't play on it. *MRR* gave it a good review, and I started getting letters

my tapes and was a fan. Besides, I'd always wanted to travel and live someplace different, so I moved.

Scott: Did you plan on continuing M.O.T.O. when you moved, with a band or as a solo artist?

Paul: I did intend on continuing M.O.T.O., either as a band or solo.... It's a good brand name.

Scott: Why did you move to Chicago?

Paul: By 1989 the Boston area was getting more and more expensive, and a friend of ours from Chicago who'd just graduated from Harvard convinced me and Beck to move there, because, at the time, Chicago was more affordable.

Scott: How long was it before you started playing out in Chicago?

Paul: We knew the Chicago band Green and stayed with Jeff Lescher and Ken Kurson for awhile before we found places. Green got us on the bill of a show they were playing the

Then I got this goofy idea that I wanted to do this for the rest of my life.

I WAS JUST AMBITIOUS ENOUGH TO GET INTO TROUBLE.

from people—this was before the Internet and e-mail—who had read the review of the cassette and wanted to buy a copy. So I started getting pen pals, some of whom I still stay in touch with today, like Russ Stedman—a prolific songwriter and home-recording artist from South Dakota.

Scott: When did you leave New Orleans and why the move to Boston?

Paul: I moved from New Orleans to Boston—Somerville, Massachusetts to be exact—on October 31, 1987. I moved because one of my penpals who was living there, Beck Dudley, talked me into it. She'd heard one of

first weekend we were there at a bar called Phyllis' on Division Street.

Scott: How long before the line-up changed?

Paul: Me and Beck Dudley played as a duo from 1987-1993. After that, Beck won an architect's scholarship to study in Japan and decided to focus on that. So I kept looking for other people to play with.

Scott: When did you start touring so extensively?

Paul: I didn't really get to tour much until 2002. The internet was around by then, of course, but I didn't really get online till the late '90s. The internet helped make it much

**I don't like
dragging vinyl
around to gigs,
ALTHOUGH I
DON'T MIND SO
MUCH WHEN
PEOPLE BUY
THEM.**



easier to contact people, have them hear the music, set up gigs and tours. In the early days, I didn't tour much because we didn't have a touring vehicle and it was hard to get off work for that long. I enjoyed putting out a cassette of songs every year. But then I thought I should really give the music a real good hard try, because people would tell me that my songs were great and should be played all over the radio. So I gave it a try. I figured the worst I could do was fail.

Scott: These days, your headquarters is a bit farther up the coast in New Hampshire. How'd that happen?

Paul: I met this J.V. gal here that I married. Turns out she's a bass player, so I asked her to play bass. We're out here in the woods of New Hampshire somewhere. JV keeps calling me the J.D. Salinger of punk rock. I try to be the S.E. Hinton of power pop, though. It's good to have something to strive for.

Scott: So many different labels have released your stuff. How do you hook up with these folks?

Paul: I met Ilari of Blast Of Silence in Stockholm in 2008. I've known Jason of Rerun Records since the '90s. Jason has even drummed at M.O.T.O. gigs over the years in Milwaukee, Madison, and St. Louis. I've also known Dan McNeillie of Secret Mission, who just released our *Shitty Kids 7" EP*, since the 2000s when he set up our Pittsburgh shows. Mostly, small labels over the years would contact me and ask if I'm interested in doing a release, usually a 7". I'm usually happy to do it because I can't afford to press vinyl myself and everyone seems to want vinyl these days. I'm very grateful for all the labels that have released our stuff through the years.

Scott: "Crystallize My Penis" is the first M.O.T.O. song that came out on vinyl as part of the *Footprints of God* compilation 7"

EP (Tulpa Records 1988) and it's also a fan favorite that you often close your sets with. When you picked that song for the first vinyl appearance, did you have any idea it would be one of your most well-known songs that you'd still be playing almost every set?

Paul: I certainly did not. It's not one of my best songs. It was a three-chord throwaway that I tried to make entertaining for the compilation 7". It is easy and fun to play, though. That's our "Whole Lotta Love," in a way.

Scott: Did you submit a lot of cassettes to labels in the '90s to have so many 7"s released, or did they contact you?

Paul: They usually contacted me—they weren't usually "labels" in the traditional sense, but generally well-meaning individuals who'd put out records now and then. I'd sent cassettes to bigger labels in the past. Twin/Tone Records sent me a nice note telling me my songs were good, but the lyrics were "gratingly silly." Same label that released songs like "Gary's Got a Boner" and "Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out."

Scott: Any releases that you wish you hadn't done?

Paul: Maybe. There are some things that were on cassettes that I wish didn't come out on vinyl. I know a lot of people like the *Bolt* cassette/LP the way it is, but I think I left off some good songs that would have made that record better. Instead I tried to make *Bolt* more "punk" sounding and, in retrospect, that wasn't a good idea.

Scott: Do you own copies of all of M.O.T.O.'s releases?

Paul: No. Some of them I sold a few years back because I think they should belong to fans instead of just sitting on a shelf at home.

Scott: You've softened your stance on CDs over the years, is that right?

Paul: I like CDs better now. They're cheaper to make, you can sell them for less, and you can fit eighty minutes of sound on one, which is enough for most double LPs. You can play them in your car, upload them easily onto a laptop and put them on an iPod. Whereas vinyl records are expensive to make, expensive to ship, heavy to haul around on the road, sonically limited, not as much listening time as a CD, and also kinda fragile—they can warp. And one scratch from a phonograph needle and it's ruined.

Scott: How do you explain the continued interest in M.O.T.O. 7"s?

Paul: I have no idea. I think certain people like 7" records a lot. I do admit 7" records are kinda nifty, even though I don't like dragging vinyl around to gigs, although I don't mind so much when people buy them.

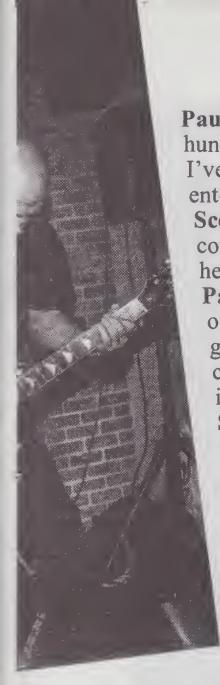
Scott: Has digital distribution been a good thing or a bad thing?

Paul: It's nice when I get paid. It's good that things are available, in a way. It sucks that some sites make all this revenue from the music and not share very much to the artists. The guy who started Spotify, Daniel Ek, now has more than \$300 million U.S. I guess I'm in the wrong line of work.

Scott: I've noticed that all of your recordings are available on Spotify. What's your stance on people sharing M.O.T.O. MP3s?

Paul: I guess if people want to share tunes, I can't stop 'em. It does get the music around, though. Not quite sure what to think about that. It's nice to get paid, though. Please remember the hard-working composers and songwriters, folks. If you're feeling generous, you can always PayPaul at PayPal. Motospam@yahoo.com!

Scott: Any guess on how many original songs you've written over the years? About how many of those could you play off the top of your head today?



Paul: I think I got a little over five hundred titles on my ASCAP list. I've got a bunch more I haven't entered yet.

Scott: About how many of those could you play off the top of your head today?

Paul: I could probably play any of my songs if possible—might get the words wrong, but, eh—I could wing it. I've been winging it for years.

Scott: Outside of the shows, what's your favorite part of touring? What's the worst part, besides the drives?

Paul: Actually driving is my favorite part of touring. I like traveling with band members and enjoying their company, but I really love driving alone for long distances. I make up a lot of songs that way. I

guess the worst part of touring would be setting up the whole thing. I've been booking tours myself, in the U.S. anyway, and frankly I'm not very good at it. I need a real booking agent who can get us guarantees and good treatment, things like that.

Scott: What have been your day jobs to continue doing M.O.T.O., if even sporadically?

I think I've got a song about a building code dispute, BUT YOU CAN'T DANCE TO IT.

Paul: A lot of different things over the years, mostly blue and grey-collar-related temp work, but since about 2011 I've been doing M.O.T.O. almost exclusively. Not many jobs to speak of since then. I try to live frugally.

Scott: What's the longest period you had a consistent line-up?

Paul: A tie, I think, between the New Orleans line-up (1981-1987) and the Beck Dudley line-up (1987-1993). Dennis Spaag (on bass) has played with me the longest, though.

Scott: Have you ever written a political song? What was it about?

Paul: I think I've got a song about a building code dispute, but you can't dance to it. I'm not much on specific political-type songs. I like to have songs about universal situations that can be applied to any personal/social level—or not. Sometimes silliness can prevail.

Scott: Do you think that some of your lyrical subject matter has kept M.O.T.O. from achieving more success or kept some people from giving the band a fair shake?

Paul: I think the reason that M.O.T.O. is not more successful is a combination of laziness and lack of focus on my part. For the most part, I'm kind of scattershot at best. But I've

been very lucky to get help and opportunities from some very good people who like my music, and have helped me to continue over the years.

Scott: Have you ever had anybody really complain to you about lyrics? Do you care?

Paul: As far as my lyrics, I knew what I was getting into when I wrote them. There have been bands who write similar lyrics who seem to do much better, but I'd rather not worry about it.

Scott: Why so many songs about penises?

Paul: To be honest, I'd say that over ninety-nine percent of my song lyrics are penis-free. The song "Dick About It" is more about dealing with someone who is prone to ignorant, arrogant behavior. I try to write lyrics that catch people's ears so that they're almost forced to respond—usually with, "What the hell did he just say?" You say the word "penis" and people tend to prick up their ears, so to speak.

Scott: Meeting Garrett Hammond has been really good for the M.O.T.O. sound. Can you explain how that happened?

Paul: I met Garret Hammond in Chicago in 1995. He was our drummer for a few years and still plays with us from time to time when we come to Chicago. He runs Brill Basement studio in Downers Grove, IL and is great at

sonic navigation and mastering. I completely recommend him to anyone looking to record, mix, or master their records.

Scott: I guess you could say M.O.T.O. is a bit of a family affair these days. How did you meet J.V.?

Paul: I met J.V. online—she'd been listening to M.O.T.O. since 1993, when the late great Joe Coughlin of Boston gave her a M.O.T.O. cassette. She'd been singing and playing bass in various bands in the Boston scene since the '90s, as well as River City Rebels since 2010, so after we became a couple I asked her if she'd like to play bass for me.

J.V.: At the time of this interview, I've done seventy shows with Paul in one year's time. There've been so many great nights! But one of my favorites so far was in New Orleans at the Circle Bar. We toured down that way with the idea that it'd culminate in a show with "The Original 75%" M.O.T.O.: Paul with Mike and Jeff Tomeny and Heath Horridge on drums. I couldn't wait to see these guys. I was totally happy just to hang out at the bar... um, I mean, *merch table* and bask in the greatness. But at the last minute, Jeff had to cancel, so I ended up playing bass instead. I was pretty nervous, but I didn't need to be. It was so much fun! And our "opening act" was Norbert Slama, the gypsy jazz accordionist



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I GENERALLY TRY NOT TO BE SENTIMENTAL ABOUT GUITARS, EQUIPMENT, OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT.

They can be stolen or broken.

who toured with Josephine Baker. That was definitely a night to remember, from what I can actually remember about it. There was also that memorial/birthday party for Joe Coughlin at the Midway in Boston last May...

Paul: Yes, that was a magical night. We ended the set with a medley of "Don't Fear the Reaper" and "Bite It You Scum." Joey woulda loved it.

Scott: Blue Öyster Cult into GG Allin? Nice! What was the most disastrous show ever?

Paul: There's been a few over the decades. We did have a show in Oxford, Miss. a few months ago where the guy who booked us neglected to tell us that the venue didn't have a PA system... after we drove six hours through a hellish rain and lightning storm to get there.

J.V.: Yeah, that one.

Scott: Most difficult producer?

Paul: I've pretty much been the producer on all of our stuff, so I guess the most difficult producer would be me.

Scott: Last year, Razorcake ran M.O.T.O.'s Chinese tour diary online. Did the Chinese tour meet your expectations? Any plans to return?

Paul: China was amazing in so many ways. I'm very glad we got to go to China. We would love to return!

J.V.: Actually, China *surpassed* my expectations. We were a little nervous about the whole thing, kinda looking at it as one of those things we'd be glad we *did* but not so sure how glad we'd be in the *doing* of it. But it ended up being wonderful. Lao Bi and Chachy and the gang took such good care of us. The shows were really lively and well-received, the people totally dug us, and we didn't get any sort of exotic food poisoning. I can't wait to go back!

Scott: How can you explain having a glorious mop of silver hair at fifty when other rockers go bald at thirty? This is a serious question.

Paul: I come from hairy lineage. Both Mom and Dad's families had substantial cranial foliage.

J.V.: He made a deal with the ghost of Jay Sebring.

Scott: I've noticed you're very active on Facebook and that you post a lot of political content. Do you think this could alienate some fans?

Paul: Well, that's my personal Facebook and not the M.O.T.O. Facebook. I like to say or post what I like. If my opinions make people not want to listen to my songs, then I guess they're not really into the music anyway. There's a lot of artists whose work I like, even though I don't agree with their views or even like them personally. I'd rather not have politics getting mixed up with M.O.T.O. so that's why I post those things on my personal Facebook page instead.

J.V.: On the other hand, my Facebook page is rife with cat memes and ladies' room selfies, so if you're looking for mindless internet amusement, then come on down!

Scott: Can you describe the recording setup today? How much has it changed from when you recorded all of the original M.O.T.O. cassette albums?

Paul: It's not changed much at all. I still use a cassette 4-track. I still haven't upgraded. I'm a bit lazy that way.

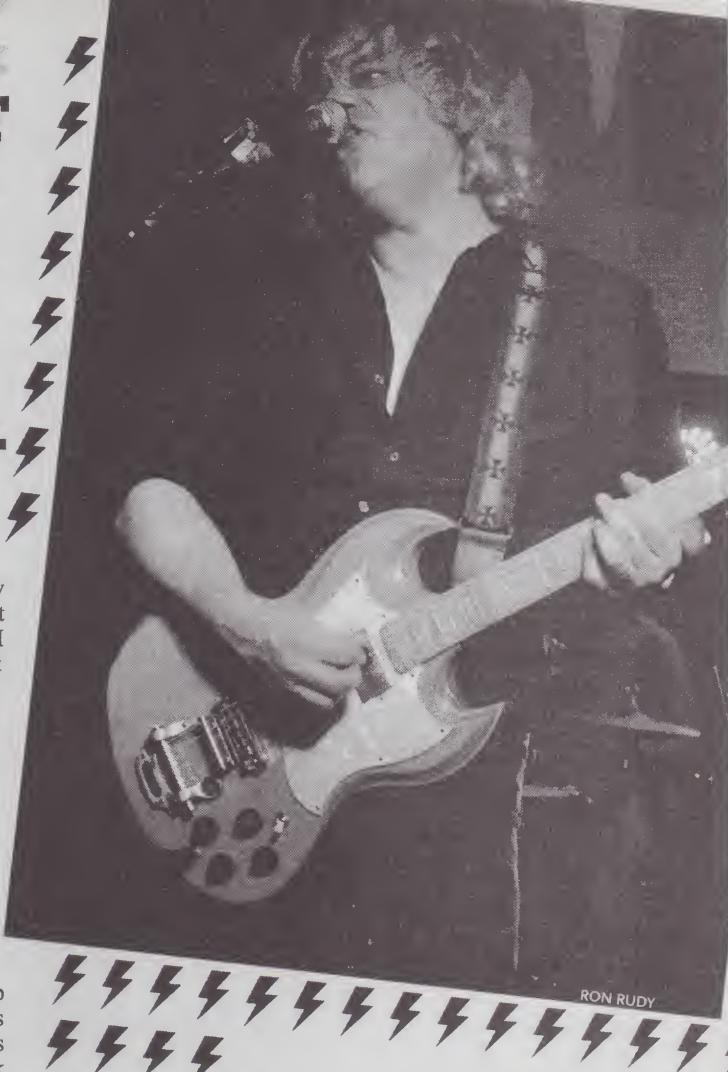
Scott: What are your thoughts about digital recording? Doing any of that at home?

Paul: No, still haven't gotten around to it. Been meaning to for about fifteen years or so. I'm used to cassettes, I guess. If I do record digitally, it's usually with Garret Hammond or someone who knows how to work that stuff. You can do a lot of things with digital that's not so easy with cassette, like adding unlimited tracks.

Scott: What's your favorite guitar that you still have and play?

Paul: Ampeg Stud—I bought it from Beck Dudley in 1987. Not a perfect guitar, but it's kinda unique. I got another one just like it, but it needs work. I generally try not to be sentimental about guitars, equipment, or anything like that. They can be stolen or broken.

Scott: Favorite guitar you no longer own?



RON RUDY

Paul: Hard to say, I'm not very sentimental about guitars anymore. Actually, I had an old Fender Musicmaster bass, small scale, that I sold to Darius Hurley of Criminal IQ Records for his son. It was very comfortable and easy to play. I also had an old '60s Vox violin-shaped bass that was pretty worn but still usable. It had a great hollow sound.

Scott: Best foreign cuisine discovered while touring?

Paul: Very hard question to answer. I've been to Italy, Spain, France, Germany—but the food in China was so amazing! Especially these big, delicious noodles made by the people from the Muslim area of China. Wow!

J.V.: Those were incredible. And, oddly enough, there's a little restaurant about half an hour away from here that actually serves the same noodles! Kinda obscure dining choice for our part of the region, but that's where it is. Boston people, check out Gene's Chinese Flatbread Café in Chelmsford, Mass. I think they have one in Chinatown, too.

Scott: How does your family feel about your decision to devote your life to rock'n'roll? Any regrets?

Paul: My parents and siblings didn't mind. Everyone in my family pretty much does what they want to do. I've had great support from my older sisters—they were and are always encouraging.

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JACK CALLAGHAN

Scott: Any M.O.T.O. Spinal Tap moments come to mind?

Paul: None quite on the level of Spinal Tap. Once we opened for an Elvis impersonator at a school fair in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana. He was pretty good. Also around the same time, we played a victory party in New Orleans for a losing candidate, but before that election my dad told me that that candidate's father had messed him around on some deal a few years back, so I didn't feel too bad about it. Got paid and drank for free.

Scott: You've got decades of home demos to comb through when you embark on new studio projects. Is there any method to determining which songs will be lifted from the tapes to get the full band studio treatment?

Paul: No real method. Just whatever comes to hand, whether new or old. I try to find older stuff and get it out. I forget what songs I have sometimes.

Scott: How often does M.O.T.O. practice?

Paul: I'm pretty lazy, so we don't practice as much as we oughta—we usually practice more before recording or gigging.

Scott: Do you do any vocal training? All of those shows must put a strain on your voice.

Paul: The only formal vocal training I've had was in high school. My freshman chorus teacher was Anthony Laciura, who went on to sing at the Metropolitan Opera and also played Eddie Kessler on the TV series *Boardwalk Empire*. I don't think Mr. Laciura would approve of my singing style today, but I think my voice has gotten stronger and my technique has gotten better over the years.

I can sing high notes with less strain, and I don't shout myself hoarse like I used to. I do try to rest whenever possible. So I guess my laziness is useful after all.

J.V.: I always feel bad about asking Paul to practice. "You know those hundreds of songs you've played thousands of times over dozens of years? Yeah...would you mind running them through in the living room for me?" So I try to work them out on my own a little bit. If I can just get seventy-five more of them down I'll be almost a tenth of the way through the catalog!

Scott: Does M.O.T.O. ever turn off?

Paul: We do take breaks. I did have a stretch from January 2011 to August 2012 where I almost never stopped—Australia, Japan, U.S., Canada, Europe, then back on the road in the States. I played with a lot of local musicians in different towns that know enough of my tunes to bang out a good hour set or so. It was pretty insane. I think I was trying to kill myself by playing till I died on the road—an honorable way to die, right?

J.V.: Glad you screwed up that particular plan.

Scott: Would you say that you've done more acoustic sets the last decade? Was that born out of necessity?

Paul: I've probably played more solo sets, well not really acoustic, but with a quieter electric, in the past two years than I'd played before. I thought I'd give it a try, because it's so much easier and cheaper to just have a guitar and not have to bring a band along. Plus it's easier on the vocal cords, and I can do a lot more songs or requests off the cuff.

I FEEL BAD ASKING PAUL TO PRACTICE. "YOU KNOW THOSE HUNDREDS OF SONGS YOU'VE PLAYED THOUSANDS OF TIMES OVER DOZENS OF YEARS? WOULD YOU MIND RUNNING THEM THROUGH IN THE LIVING ROOM FOR ME?"

Scott: How do you like that dynamic compared to the full band experience?

Paul: Of course you don't get the loud band dynamics, which most people seem to like. I do like playing loud rock sets, but I can do a lot of other stuff when I play solo. And even though I'm less loud playing solo, I'm not really "quiet," if you know what I mean. I also get to do more of my stand-up material, too. You know, observational comedy. Like, have you ever noticed there's no green wine? There's green grapes... but there's no green wine. Weird, right?

Scott: What has kept you going for so long, not giving up or giving in?

Paul: Ego mostly, and a steadfast dislike of day jobs. Wanderlust. One of my earliest memories is seeing the Beatles on *Ed Sullivan* when I was three years old. And I remember when I was a kid and I figured out how to play and sing "Hang on Sloopy" on my big sister's nylon-string guitar. It was like a light suddenly went on.

Streaming MP3s, tour dates, and other band information can be found on M.O.T.O.'s semi-official homepage at: reverbnation.com/MOTOPAC

You can also reach the M.O.T.O. mailorder at: ReRunRecordsSTL.com

TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE



Alanna Why

Top Five Bands I Saw at Ottawa Explosion Weekend

1. Protomartyr
2. TV Freaks
3. The White Wires
4. Pookie & The Poodlez
5. Tweens

Andy Garcia

1. Egrets Of Ergot, *Wimberly's Shortcomings 7"*
2. Moira Scar, live
3. *Punk in Africa* DVD
4. Institute 12"
5. The Coathangers, *Suck My Shirt*

Aphid Peewit

- OFF!, *Wasted Years* CD
- *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*, Slavoj Zizek DVD
- *Historia Discordia* by Adam Gorightly (book)
- *If This Isn't Nice, What Is?* by Kurt Vonnegut (book)
- *Animate Earth*, Stephan Harding DVD

Art Ettinger

- Who Killed Spikey Jacket?, *Beerstorm Trooper 7"EP*
- Hellstomper, *One Take, Motherfuckers* LP
- Todd Congelliere, *Wrong Side* LP
- The Meatmen, *Savage Sagas* LP
- Iron City Hooligans, *Armored Saints 12"EP*

Camille Reynolds

Top 5 New LPs on Rotation in Mi Casa

1. Perfect Pussy, *Say Yes to Love*
2. Yi, *Crying*
3. Brain F#, *Empty Set*
4. Good Throb, *Fuck Off*
5. Protomartyr, *Under Color of Official Right*

Cassie Sneider

Top 5 Songs to Sing to a Pug While Replacing the Word "Love" with "Pug"

1. "I Want to Know What [Pug] Is" by Foreigner
2. "Cradle of [Pug]" by Billy Idol
3. "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout [Pug]" by Van Halen
4. "What's [Pug] Got to Do with It" by Tina Turner
5. "Modern [Pug]" by David Bowie

Chad Williams

1. No Problem, *Already Dead* LP
2. Battle Ruins, *Battle Ruins* LP
3. Proxy, *Slow Suicide 7"*
4. Enabler, *La Fin*
5. Absolue Du Monde LP

Rough Kids, The State I'm In LP

Chris Terry

1. Skull Practitioners cassette
2. The Distillers, *Coral Fang* LP
3. Freeway & Girl Talk, *Broken Ankles* digital EP
4. *As You Were, Vol. 3* (Comic)
5. Short story "Real Skater Music" on HobartPulp.com

Christina Zamora

Top 5 Funniest Shows I've Been to Or Thrown Since Moving to the PNW (Longview, WA)

1. Pixies / Best Coast (Portland)
2. Against Me! / Laura Stevenson / Cheap Girls (Portland)
3. Plow United / Tight Bros / Divers / The Lolligaggers / Dead Giveaways (Longview)
4. Masked Intruder / Elway / Sam Russo / The Bloodtypes (Longview)
5. Dead Bars / Pageripper / The Lolligaggers (Longview)

Craven Rock

1. R.I.P Maya Angelou, Scott Asheton, Dave Brockie AKA Oderus Urungus. Y'all meant a lot to me!
2. *American Splendor* by Harvey Pekar (book)
3. *Zero Fade* by Chris L. Terry (book)
4. Seeing Inly at The Sunset before walking down the street to be floored by Shabazz Palaces at The Tractor.
5. Shark Pact, Cancers, Dogjaw, Iron Chic at Flophouse in Olympia

Daryl Gussin

- Future Virgins, "Late Republic" b/w "Centre" 7"
- Sonic Avenues, *Mistakes* LP
- Street Eaters, *BLOOD:::MUSCLES::BONES* LP
- Radioactivity, live at VLHS
- DMFK, live at Pehrspace, tie with Foster Body, live at the Wulf Den

Designated Dale

1. The Wedding Banned playing at Kyle and Elizabeth McCarthy's wedding 5/25/14. The couple that rocks onstage together stays together! Congrats again, you two!
2. Hanging out Blue Island style with Chicago homeslices Little Dave and Lyndsey Merriman. The power of the Maple Leaf Inn and Rock Island Public House compels you!
3. SNFU at 333 Live downtown L.A. on 5/26/14. Still bringing it after all these years and a real class act to play with. Some bands should take an example from these cats.
4. Manic Hispanic at Alex's Bar on 6/13/14. Yes, they continue rock as much as they make me laugh. Gacho!
5. My skull winning the fight against my truck's back window without a drop of blood spared. Talk about being a hard-headed motherfucker.

Eric Baskauskas

- Fucked Up, *Glass Boys*
- White Lung, *Deep Fantasy*
- Pelican, live at The Owl, Chicago, 5/19/2014
- Dante's Pizza, Chicago
- Fucked Up, *Glass Boys* (Slow Version)

Indiana Laub

Top 5 Sets from the Hi Ho Silver, Away! Midwest Tour

- Bat Manors in Provo, UT
- Vyvyan in Bloomington, IN
- Arsenals in St. Louis, MO
- Happy Birthday in Oklahoma City, OK
- Bread Club in San Jose, CA

Jamie Rotante

Soundtrack for Your Next Family BBQ

1. "Beach Party Vietnam" by Dead Milkmen
2. "Motherfucker" by Dwarves
3. "Fuck People" by OFF!
4. "Born of Man and Woman" by Night Birds
5. "Walkin' on the Sun" by Smash Mouth

Jennifer Federico

Top 5 Songs that Make My Insides Hurt a Little

- "Tough to Breathe" by No More Art
- "Alone Again Or" by The Damned
- "Allvar" by Våonna Inget
- "Nothing You Could Say" by Big Eyes
- "Throwaway" by Synthetic ID

Jim Ruland

- Mind Spiders writing a song for the book trailer to my new novel *Forest of Fortune*
- *Deep Ellum* by Brandon Hobson from Calamari Press
- Mellow Pages Library in Bushwick
- Baby Metal, *Baby Metal*
- OFF!, *Wasted Years*

John Mule

1. Foster Body at The Wulf Den
2. Night Birds at The Observatory

Quitting my pizza delivery job.

Sal Lucci

1. *LIVE FAST DIE, Hit Stains* LP
2. *Ausmuteants*, Self-titled LP
3. *Lumpy And The Dumpers, Demos* 7"
4. *Pagans, What's This Shit? 1977/1979* LP
5. *Thee Mighty Fevers, Fuck'n Great R'n'R* LP

Sean Arenas

- Hard Girls, *A Thousand Surfaces* LP
- Los Gatos Negros, Self-titled LP
- Vånnä Inget, *Ingen Botten* LP
- Colossal Wrecks, *Waste the Moments* LP
- Muuy Bien, *D.Y.I.* LP

Sean Koepenick

Best Punk Covers of Songs by The Smiths

1. "Ask" by Vacation
2. "What Difference Does It Make?" by Face To Face
3. "London" by Down By Law
4. "How Soon Is Now?" by The Meatmen
5. "Panic" by The Business

Toby Tober

Top 5 Movies I Have Enjoyed Recently

1. *Jodorowsky's Dune*
2. *Wrinkles*
3. *Axe Cop* (series)
4. *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*
5. *The 99%: Occupy Everywhere*

Todd Taylor

- Future Virgins, "Late Republic" b/w "Centre" 7"
- Radioactivity, Suspicious Beasts, Steppe People, Spokenest, live at VLHS
- DFMK, Summer Vacation, Handski, live at Pehrspace
- Street Eaters, *BLOOD::MUSCLES::BONES* LP
- Three-way tie for zinesters in books: *Truckface Anthology Volume 2, Masque of Infamy* by Kelly Dessaint, *As You Were: A Punk Comix Anthology*

Tommy Vandervort

1. Hospital Job, *Downer Downer Downer* LP
2. Hysterese, Self-titled LP
3. Beach Slang, *Who Would Want Anything So Broken?* EP
4. Occult Detective Club, *Alright Gentlemen* 7"
5. Angry and Anxious (Podcast with Ryan Young and friends)



3. The used CD bin at Lovell's Records, Whittier, CA
4. Rile 9 Collective (L.A. oi!)
5. Razorcake World Cup Pool, 2014 (Come ooooo, Ecuador!)

Juan Espinosa

- Night Birds, Rough Kids, Neighborhood Brats, Catholic Spit, Rayos X live at East 7th, L.A.
- Sexdrome, live at Los Globos, Silverlake
- Various Artists, *Influence: Tribute to Big Boys* LP
- Sad Boys, *Cry Now Cry Later* 7"
- Blazing Eye, *New York's Alright* cassette

Kevin Dunn

1. Flesh Wounds, "Bitter Boy" 7"
2. Unwelcome Guests, *Wavering*
3. The Fur Coats, *The League of Extraordinary Octopuses*
4. Nightmare Boyzzz, *Bad Patterns*
5. Needles//Pins, *Shamebirds*

Kurt Morris

1. Strand Of Oaks, *Heal*
2. Misery Index, *The Killing Gods*
3. The Creeps, *Eulogies*
4. John Coltrane, *Blue Train*
5. Slayer (everything)

Lauren Measure

Top 5 Bands I'm Psyched on Right Now

1. Priests
2. Infinity Hotel
3. All Dogs
4. Adult Dude
5. Downtown Boys

Lisa Weiss

World Cup Fever!

- Brazil: Abuso Sonoro, *Revolte-se!!!* 7"
- Italy: Negazionale, *Lo Spirito Continua* LP
- Colombia: La Pestilencia, *Balistica* CD
- England: Leatherface, *Horsebox* LP
- Japan: Forward, *Burn Down the Corrupted Justice* LP

Mark Twinstworthy

- Street Eaters, *BLOOD::MUSCLES::BONES* LP
- Fire Retarded, *Scroggs Manor* LP
- Unholy Two, *Talk about Hardcore* LP
- Watery Love, *Decorative Feeling* LP
- Zig-Zags, Self-titled LP

Matt Average

- Suburban Mutilation, *The Opera Ain't Over Til The Fat Lady Sings* CD
- Verbal Abuse, *Just an American Band* LP
- T. Rex, *The Slider* LP
- Big Boys, *Lullabies Help the Brain Grow* LP
- Skeptet, *Phase 3* LP

Matt Seward

Top 5 Oppressive Southern Heat and Humidity Summer Jams

1. Planes Mistaken For Stars / Hawks And Doves
2. Avail
3. Big Boys
4. Chuck Ragan and/or Chris Wppard
5. Fat Possum's Recorded by George Mitchell series

Mike Faloon

1. Baseball Project, 3rd LP
2. Guided By Voices, *Motivational Jumpsuit* LP
3. Lisa Mezzacappa's Bait & Switch, *Comeuppance* CD
4. Night Birds, *Monster Surf* 7" EP
5. Safes, *Record Heat* LP

Mike Frame

1. Bob Mould, *Beauty & Ruin* CD
2. Bob Mould, *The Silver Age* CD
3. The Coup, entire catalog celebrated
4. Paul Westerberg, *Eventually* LP
5. Dan Baird, entire catalog celebrated

Naked Rob

Terrible Tuesday Radio Show, SF

1. Roy And The Devil's Motorcycle, *Tino Frozen Angel* CD (Swiss dirty garage blues folk trash)
2. Beige Eagle Boys, *You're Gonna Get Yours* LP (Detroit noise-rock)
3. Blackwulf, *Mind Traveler* LP (San Francisco rock'n'roll)
4. Permanent Ruin, *San Jose* 7" (San Jose hardcore)
5. Condominium, *Thug* 7" (Twin Cities hardcore)

Nardwuar the Human Serviette

1. *Ripple Rock Fanzine*, amazingness from Finland!
2. MFC, *Chicken* CD, Canadian in the U.K. making incredible "Northwest Flavored" rock'n'roll!
3. The Dishrags, *Three* LP, comp of Vancouver's first all-girl punk band's material!

4. Needles//Pins, *Shamebirds* LP, Vancouver represent!
5. paradiseofgaragecomps. blogspot.ca—super blog filled with garage goodness!

Nighthawk**Top 5 Reasons I Am Excited for Summer**

- Nobodys at Awesome Fest
- Quitting my pizza delivery job
- Neighborhood Brats in St. Louis
- Outdoor Activities
- Playing at Awesome Fest

Paul Silver

1. Radioactivity and Suspicious Beasts at Tower Bar, San Diego, and VLHS
2. Zero Boys and Neighborhood Brats at Soda Bar, San Diego
3. Masked Intruder, *M.I.* LP
4. DFMK and White Murder at The Shakedown Bar, San Diego
5. Beach Slang, *Who Would Ever Want Anything So Broken* EP

Replay Dave

- War On Drugs, *Lost in the Dream*
- Cheap Girls, *Famous Graves*
- Moonraker, *The Age of Light* 10"
- Floor, *Oblation*
- Gateway District, *Partial Traces*

Rev. Norb

- Various Artists, *Radio Ready Wisconsin* LP
- Thee Mighty Fevers / Morbeats, *Weird Affairs and Teengeneration Accidents*, Split 7"
- Antiseen / Meatmen, *The Tribute with Two Heads*, Split 7"
- Meatmen, *Savage Sagas of the Meatmen* CD
- Sorrows, *Good Times Bad Times* LP

Rich Cocksdedge

1. The Fur Coats, *The League of Extraordinary Octopuses* LP
2. 7 Seconds, *Leave a Light On* LP
3. Only Crime, *Pursuance* LP
4. Earth Girls, *Wrong Side of History* 7"
5. The Chantey Hook, *Underground* 7"

Ryan Nichols

1. Getting my AA
2. Missing my Razorcake record review deadline because of #1
3. *Nothing Can Hurt Me* (Big Star documentary)
4. Reigning Sound, *Time Bomb High School*
5. Dax Riggs, acoustic at Monty Bar

1-800-BAND: Diver Blue: 12" EP

I unabashedly love power pop and this record delivers, having all of the trappings of a solid power pop band straight out of the early '80s. Sounding not unlike early material from The Cars or maybe even something like The Plimsouls, this four song EP sounds and looks as authentic as they come, which is quite a feat for a current band playing this kind of stuff. Much like an early '80s teen movie, it's all about being carefree, having fun, and getting the girl (or boy) in the end. That's exactly where this record takes me, and it's quite an enjoyable ride. —Mark Twistor (Almost Ready, almostreadyrecords.com)

7 SECONDS: Leave a Light On: LP/CD

It's damn refreshing to know that some of punk rocks elder statesmen can still crank out an album of fist-pumping, singalong goodness, and that's what 7 Seconds does here, a mere ten years after its last long player. *Leave a Light On* contains fourteen tracks that are more varied than those on that last album, throwing in some less frenetic, more harmonious songs to broaden the musical landscape without really altering the standard 7 Seconds blueprint. The underlying message remains one of positivity and it's a great fillip on those darker days when one is feeling like no good can come from any interaction with the world. Does any band do hardcore with a poppy bent better than 7 Seconds? I think not. —Rich Cocksedge (Rise, riserecords.com)

99999999: White Devils: 7" EP

Trippy-dippy garage rock, slightly tinged with psychedelic flourishes to add some color. Tunes are primitive yet oddly catchy. —Jimmy Alvarado (HoZac, hozacrecords.com)

ACHTUNGS: Self-titled: 7"

Looks like this record is out just ahead of their upcoming Total Punk release. It's the kind of record that makes you say, "How could there *not* be a band called Achtungs that sounds like this already?" I say that as a compliment, of course. Two, maybe three chords (you really don't need more), some piss and vinegar, house that in a simple black and white paper sleeve, and you got yourself a good record. I'm even okay with the flange-y solo in "I'm Not the One." —Sal Lucci (Going Underground)

ACOUSMA: Self-titled: 7" EP

Above average hardcore keeps the listener engaged via song structures that incorporate lots of rhythmic changes

RECORD REVIEWS



"Fun, fun, and more fucking fun."

—Juan Espinosa

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Influence: A Tribute to Big Boys*: LP

and sophisticated chord patterns, while the singer attempts to obliterate any vestiges of his vocal chords. Seriously, homie must be rendered mute for several weeks after a given gig if he's putting the same amount of oomph into their live sets. Four tunes, six minutes and change, and none of that time wasted. —Jimmy Alvarado (High Fashion Industries)

AMA-DOTS: Self-titled: LP

This was Milwaukee's darker, funkier, heavier answer to Siouxsie & The Banshees back in the early '80s. While I had plenty of older, wiser friends who numbered themselves among this artsy, mixed gender ensemble's supporters at the time, I never much cared for bands like this back in the day, and, to tell you the truth, I still don't. *It's just so unsuitable for playing at barbecues!* I tried to like it, but it just seems weird and tiring and i-don't-know-what-they're-trying-to-do-and-i-kind-of-don't-care-either-ish. Sorry I'm so musically unadventurous. Now shut up and pass the Usinger's®. BEST SONG: "Hit Girls." BEST SONG TITLE: "Strange Brute." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: There are hardly any dots anywhere. —Rev. Nørø (Rerun, rerunrecordsstl.com)

ANTISEEN / MEATMEN:***The Tribute with Two Heads: Split: 7"***

Two squads of tenured fiends deliver high concept goon-rock by the pitchforkful, each contributing one song about permanently lapsed scum-rocker GG Allin, as well as a cover of one of the Sex Pistols' viler numbers. Whilst I am inclined to give the nod to the hairy brutes of Antiseen for the better GG song, due to the sheer bather-along catchiness of "G.G. PHD," ((though Tesco's "rest in feces GG you smelly fuck!" quip closes out the Meatmen's "Rock & Roll Enema," with a classy flourish)), it's the Meatmen's cover of "Bodies," that wins the day—a rib-splittin' remake even fouler than the original, and actually the best cover of the song I've ever heard. *YOU'LL DIAGRAM THAT LAST SENTENCE IN HELL, SATAN!!!* BEST SONG: The Meatmen, "Bodies." BEST SONG TITLE: Actually, "Belsen Was a Gas," "G.G. PHD," "Bodies," and "Rock & Roll Enema," are all good song titles. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Cover art is taken from the movie poster for 1973's *The Thing with Two Heads*, where a racist white dude's head is transplanted onto former NFL star Rosie Grier's body. —Rev. Nørø (TKO, tkorecords.com)

APOCALYPSE MEOW: Bats! Bats! Bats! Bats! Bats! 7"

This four-song release from Off With Their Heads drummer Justin Francis instantly takes me back to mid-'90s pop punk and emo. Bands like this hone the ability to write songs that truly rock and get you moving while they move you emotionally. It's a talent I hold in high regard—to craft music that peppers nostalgia, hope, and fear through strong steady and fast rhythms. All the while, they layer beautifully melodic vocals over guitars that sing and wail. The lyrics are concise and are only slightly abstract, resulting in instant sparks of introspective feeling. Choruses of, "Spend our lives searching for the sunshine / tell me why I miss the rain," seamlessly blend in with guitars that are a little rough around the edges. I don't quite know what's going on with the last song "We Are the Whale Watcher," but it still fills me with motivation to stray from desolation. Perfect cuts for fans of bands like Leatherface, Jawbreaker, and Hot Water Music. It's the kind of music that reminds me I'm still working a shitty job into my thirties, but sometimes you need the depressing crap in life to make the rad times shine brighter. This record is already on heavy rotation for me. Hats off, gents. —Kayla Greet (A.D.D., addrecs.com / Rad Girlfriend, radgirlfriendrecords.com)

AR-KAICS, THE:**"Make It Mine" b/w "Movin' On": 7"**

"Make It Mine" is a catchy cave stomp from this Richmond band putting out solid singles at a furious rate. "Movin' On" follows suit. Beautifully overdriven guitars, thee party beat, and infectious choruses. They're a band to watch out for if you're a *Back from the Grave* fanatic. —Billups Allen (Steady Sounds, steadysounds.com)

ARMADA, LA: Crisis: 12" EP

The intensity of a Costa Rican Bad Brains weaned on Dillinger Escape Plan but actually producing memorable hardcore, La Armada will burn your show space down with sheer power and technical virtuosity. Six tracks, including a Bad Brains medley, that swing from shred to breakdown while keeping the actual tunes fresh in your mind. The group is now based in Chicago, but with song titles like "Vincho Leonelista" and "Obsolescencia," one is lead to believe La Armada is still writing lyrics with their distinct South American perspective, but lacking a lyric sheet, a listener has no way of verifying. However, pre-orders did come with a bonus Unbaptismal Certificate, solidifying their vocal

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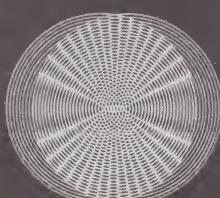
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distaste for organized Christian religion. Snatch this one up. —Matt Seward (Fat Sandwich, fatsandwichrecords.com / Profane Existence, profaneexistence.com / Puer cords)

ATLANTIC THRILLS: Self-titled: CD

It never ceases to amaze me how many new bands (re: ones that I actually enjoy) emerge from the East Coast on an almost daily basis. Atlantic Thrills are no exception to the rule. Solid, catchy '60s garage/psych. Not unlike The Black Lips, as much as it pains me to go there. Yet, they have their own thing going for them; far from a carbon copy. Well recorded and distanced from anything too psyched-out. The songs are straight forward, but far from boring. Definitely closer to ATL's masters themselves, rather than Demon's Claws or Dead Ghosts, for example. "Day at the Beach," is a hell of a track. If you're a fan of the genre, you've probably already acquired this sucker. If not, what're you waiting for? —Steve Adamyk (Almost Ready, almostreadyrecords.com)

AUSMUTEANTS: Amusements: LP

When I see a new Goner Records release, I think it will sound like one of two things: blown-out garage punk or quirky Aussie/New Zealand synth-y stuff. And I'll probably just buy it because I know I'll like it. Goner is one of the few labels throughout my entire record buying career that I'll buy something just because they put it out. Ausmuteants falls into this second

sound-type. Goner has been advertising this upcoming release for a while but I never got around to previewing them online. (Something I go back and forth in my mind as being totally against my record buying impulses and as wholly practical because I'm getting older, own a home, have bills, like to travel, blah, blah, blargh.) Mostly up-tempo numbers ("Kicked in the Head by a Horse" is best) and one moody, Clean-ish jam ("Hate This Town.") My Aussie/NZ palette is limited, so other influences are likely going over my head. Oh well, better for the enjoyment of this record as it stands, then. Goner Records, just open an Australian branch already! —Sal Lucci (Goner)

AUTISTIC YOUTH: Nonage: LP

At first blush, this sounds like yer average thud-punk stomper for which Dirlnap seems to have a soft spot, and there is definitely enough of that here to serve as a base. Pay attention, though, and you quickly find they're hurling a ton of other influences at yer noggin—subtle drone leads, Spector-like bell accents, some metal-tinged guitar duo-leads, multi-part harmonies, and no small amount of dark pop hooks dipped in post-punk eccentricity—all the while keeping the rhythms insistent and pounding. Just when ye think a subgenre's on the verge of finally burning out, someone adds a new wrinkle. Kudos for some fine work. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirlnap, autisticyouth.bandcamp.com)

BABYSITTER / MONSTER TREASURE: Split: Cassette

It's always a little awkward when I get sent something from Razorkake that involves friends of mine. On one hand a bias exists, but on the other I want to share any awesomeness that is coming from my area of this small world of ours. Fuck it, here goes. Shake! is a cool label in Victoria that is working hard to put out vinyl and cassettes with all kinds of different, fun stuff. This is a split tape between Babysitter and Monster Treasure. My tape player sucks ass so I hope I am talking about the right bands. Babysitter is rocking some fuzzed-out garage-pop steeped heavily in early '90s alt rock. Monster Treasure could actually use the exact same description that I just used for Babysitter yet they sound completely different. That's weird. I like both of these bands. —Ty Stranglehold (Shake!)

BANNER PILOT: Souvenir: CD

You have to deal with the fact that the soles of your favorite low top Chucks will eventually blow out. Yes, they were your favorite, the most comfortable thing in your wardrobe, and made you feel like you were earning scads of punk points, but at some point you will have to purchase a new pair. Souvenir is an amalgamation of forgettable *Unfun*-era Jawbreaker wannabe tunes anchored by that familiar Bauermeister bass tone ("Heat Rash," "Shoreline"). The wind up octaves of the first bridge in "Colfax" are the first things that pique interest. It's the ninth song. I like

Banner Pilot. A lot. But when there are only three songs in slots nine, ten, and eleven of a twelve track album that actually sound on par with the band's past work... sorry, guys. Pass. —Matt Seward (Fat, fatwreck.com)

BEARMACE: Cold Ones: 7"

This band from Montreal offers 4 songs of tough metal influenced hardcore punk. A general lack of information included with this release doesn't offer any clues to what these guys are all about, but most fans of gnarly '80s influenced hardcore should dig this. —Mark Twistworthy (Zaxxon, zaxxon.ca)

BEASTMAN: Self-titled: Cassette

Beastman are interstellar cavemen and Vikings and ravers, and it would be fair to say they're the best hardcore band in the world. They're Funkadelic and Sun Ra and Wrangler Brutes and Nation Of Ulysses and early Meat Puppets and DRI. Their only peers are legends and ghosts. They're crawling around this planet, being dragged to the stage in chains, showing us their butts, not doing their laundry, losing their minds under bridges, electing rock'n'roll to the white house, and somehow somebody recorded them, and now it's on a tape, and now you're buying that tape. —Matt Werts (Jelly Music, jellymusicinc.bandcamp.com)

BETRAYERS:

Let the Good Times Die: Cassette

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you get with the tape) of psychedelic music from a garage somewhere in Edmonton, Alberta wins the award for best tambourine use of 2014. Like many, I'm at the point where many new garage psych bands are all starting to melt into one and sound the same to me, but there's something distinct about this tape. Maybe I'm just giving them points for incorporating a fuzzed-out harmonica and slide-guitar into the album. But you should get points for that. —Bianca(Shake!, experienceshake.com, records@experienceshake.com)

BIG BOYS:

Lullabies Help the Brain Grow: LP

It's no secret how much Austin Texas' Big Boys mean to me. I've shouted it from the rooftops and in these very pages, and if I keep getting the opportunity to write reviews of killer reissues of their albums, then damn it I'm going to! *Lullabies* is the Big Boys' second album and it really built on the foundation that was created with their debut LP *Industry Standard/Where's My Towel*. To my knowledge, there is no band that has ever been able to straddle so many separate styles with such amazing results. From the hardcore blasts of "Brickwall" and "Assault" to the funkiness of "Jump the Fence." From the off-kilter menace of "Baby Let's Play God" or "Manipulation" to the pure majesty of "Sound on Sound"... It doesn't take a super fan to know that this is one of the most important bands in punk rock history... Scratch that. Music history.

The reissue has been given the usual Light In The Attic treatment, which means it's phenomenal! A gatefold cover with an amazing, never-before-published photo of the band sweating it out on stage. You must have this. If I had the money, I'd buy everyone copies of their entire discography. —Ty Stranglehold (Light In The Attic)

BIG BOYS: *No Matter How Long the Line at the Cafeteria, There's Always a Seat: LP*

For me, choosing a favorite Big Boys album would be like asking a parent to choose their favorite child. They all have different qualities that you admire but at the end of the day you love them all the same. This is the reissue of the Big Boys' third and final album. It features two of my all-time favorite Big Boys songs ("Narrow View" and "Which Way to Go"), but let's face it, they are all good songs. As usual, Light In The Attic has pulled out all the stops for their Big Boys discography reissues. A thick stock, gatefold cover with amazing photos, stickers, original liner notes, and, hell, the mail order edition even came with a T-shirt! I've said it before and I will say it again; if you don't have this band in your life, you best remedy that. Life changing! —Ty Stranglehold (Light In The Attic)

BIG EYES: *Almost Famous: LP*

This trio of Seattle-based badasses has released their second LP, *Almost Famous*, and I am more smitten than ever. Honest lyrics with obvious "fuck

you" undertones, riffs that make you want to dance until you're covered in your own vomit, and hooks that sink into your skin before pulling you into the deep, dark ocean of Big Eyes. Don't resist, just let it take you. —Genevieve Armstrong (Grave Mistake, gravemistakerecords@gmail.com)

BOB MOULD: *Beauty and Ruin: CD/LP*

Bob Mould's last album, *Silver Age*, was a surprising success. It showed a return to some great rock and roll, reminiscent of the high points from his days in Sugar. His latest, *Beauty and Ruin*, features two pictures of him on the cover; one from his Hüsker Dü days and one from the present day. While I'm not sure if it was intentional, it's an interesting contrast because it seems as if Mould is still drawing from his days with Hüsker Dü and Sugar, bands that he played in back in the 1980s and '90s. The sound can be fast and aggressive ("Kid with Crooked Face") or more introspective and somber ("Let the Beauty Be"), but it all works well. Mould has stated that the twelve songs are broken down into four sections of three songs each: loss, reflection, acceptance, and future. Each of these sections deals with the aftermath of losing his father in 2012. Once you know that was what Mould was attempting, it opens up the album to a different interpretation. There start to be themes between the songs and the lyrics speak to the listener in an additional manner. It's not a concept album per se, but it is a look at the

aftermath of loss. Mould still knows how to play fast, the backing band of Jon Wurster and Jason Narducy is tight as ever, and the songs have great pop hooks. I have a soft spot for Sugar's *File Under Easy Listening* (I know—I'm the only one) and the Hüsker Dü material is legendary, but Bob Mould's solo material is still much better than the vast majority of music I hear on a regular basis. Anyone who has ever liked a Bob Mould project should pick this up. —Kurt Morris (Merge, mergerecords.com)

BOMBSITE: *1994: CD*

This limited edition CD was released in conjunction with the Extreme Noise Records Twentieth Anniversary show, which reunited many of the bands that were rocking the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul in the mid-'90s to celebrate the longevity of my favorite record store. Bombsite was one of those bands. Two things are important: First is how not-twenty-years-old this music sounds. Second is the way this band tapped into a style that has weaved its way through the Twin Cities punk scene since the beginning. You've probably heard it. It's that torn jeans, calloused hands, playing our hearts out, hopeful for sunny days sound that continues to hold sway in this region to this day. This style feels right here, where winters are so dark and crushing. These sounds feel warm, and Bombsite made these sounds so well, adding their own unique touch. I love that I can

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now listen to this and think about how generation after generation, the kids in Minneapolis and St. Paul climb out of their homes and slide through January winters into cinder block basements, still wearing their jackets, just excited to jump around and raise fists and have fun and survive another year. —MP Johnson (Self-released)

BOTTLENOSE KOFFINS: *Gayzilla*: LP

I wanted to hate this. The band name is not clever enough to make sense, I find the artwork lacking, and I guess I'm just PC enough to find the title *Gayzilla* distasteful. And who wants to review a surf band? There is not much to write about a surf band other than, "they play surf." However, Bottlenose Koffins (ugh) deliver a debut LP that is more than tolerable. Mix traditional surf rock, the punk stupidity of Masked Intruder, and lots of shout-along choruses ("Kristy Yamaguchi...I wanna go out and skate!") and you've got a band that would probably be lots of fun for dancing on tables and smashing bottles in your local watering hole. You gotta spin it to win it, so that'll teach me to judge a book by its cover. —Matt Seward (Get Weird!, thebottlenosekoffins.bandcamp.com)

BUM CITY SAINTS: *New Beginnings*: 7"

I don't know if it was because of the three-word name with "city" in the middle, or because it was on Pirates Press, but I was really expecting some oi/street punk stuff. I was wrong. Bum City Saints have got something

going on that I want to call "melodic hardcore" but that conjures up the wrong image. They're a hardcore punk band with melody. They've got raw guitars and vocals to match. There are choruses that you can sing along to and breakdowns and speed-ups that you can spill your beer in the pit to. I really, really like this! —Ty Stranglehold (Pirates Press)

CAPITALIST KIDS, THE: *At a Loss*: CD

I recognize that *Razorcake* covers pop punk and that it's still a thing and people are into that thing, and that's great. I just feel very removed from that world. The Capitalist Kids have a name from a punk band name generator and songs that match, I suppose. If you close your eyes and think "pop punk," you can hear the entire album, which is more of an issue than the "coolness" problem they address on their opening track ("Not '95"). But maybe there is no problem here. I'm with them politically, if not at all aesthetically. They're having fun, it's their world. Meanwhile: I'm thirty-four, and I spent the morning reading *Blood Meridian* and listening to the Bill Evans Trio and Miles Davis. What do I do with this? —Matt Werts (It's Alive, itsaliverecords.com / Toucan Play)

CHAD VANGAALEN: *Shrink Dust*: CD/LP

Chad Vangaalen has called this his country album, but don't be fooled: the use of his newly acquired pedal steel isn't overly extensive and when it is used it's effective. With twelve

songs clocking in at forty-two minutes, *Shrink Dust* is the perfect length. While it's more sedate than past albums and not nearly as weird (there's no song titled anything as outrageous as "Shave My Pussy," for example), it's still got Vangaalen's flavor of falsetto vocals, bleeps and bloops from keyboards, and an almost hypnotic beat in some songs. Many of them are tinged with sadness, more so than previous releases. (Who knew that a song about a dead dog ("Lila") could be such a bummer?) His lyrics are still offbeat and unique: "Let's get high on other people's dreams" ("Frozen Paradise") and "Cut off both my hands and threw them in the sand / Watch them swim away from me like a pair of bloody crabs" ("Cut Off My Hands") are just two such examples. Due to the mellowness and lack of complexity, this is easily Vangaalen's most accessible album, but it's still got enough of his psychedelic folk influence to mean this will never be mainstream. That's fine by me. This will be our secret pop record. —Kurt Morris (Sub Pop)

CHANNEL 3: *History*: 7"

History is another winner by these vets, showcasing a band that's been cranking out anthems for so long they've got it down to a science—hooks aplenty, singalong choruses, and all the subtle bits that color the whole thing in. The flip is a serviceable, if wholly unnecessary, cover of AC/DC's "Kicked in the Teeth." —Jimmy Alvarado (Hostage, hostagerecords.com)

CHET KNIGHT AND THE NO DISCIPLES: *Self-titled*: 7"

I grew up on *Adolf And The Piss Artists* and that band had a profound impact on me. Their one consistent member, (who also did a stint in the Templars) Chet Knight is taking a little bit of a departure with this new project, and when this record came in the mail I didn't know what to expect. "(If You're a Rebel) Rebel," is closer to his stuff in *APA*, as it has a strong UK82 influence like *Special Duties* or *Partisans* in the backbeat, but delivered with his signature growl. The other three songs are him finding a new home in a sound that runs a huge gamut of influences, but works cohesively when filtered through his experience. I hear a lot of pub rock in these songs as well as a strong influence from bands like *Small Faces* or *Humble Pie*. It's funny to point that out because I don't think these songs necessarily *sound* like those bands, but the arrangements are pointing in that direction (as well as the minor-key vocal melodies). "All I Need Is," has a strong Springsteen vibe in the backbeat and vocal delivery, but it's still so rough around the edges. Imagine a very dark, slowed down version of *APA* where the band moved in a more mature direction and you have a little bit of an idea about how these songs may sound. The lyrics on this record are top-notch and very personal. These are the kinds of songs that get stuck in your head and when you put the record on, you sit and really listen to it instead of just bobbing your head and telling your friends about the

"[Ellis] brings to life a grit-induced walk on the wild side, where people act with primal instinct and less with reason." —The Round Up



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heavy jams. I don't know if this is an ongoing project or just a one-off and I know that there have been a lot of personal struggles with Chet over the last couple of years, but I sincerely hope this is something that keeps going because this 7" is an indicator something great that could come down the road. —Ian Wise (45 Revolutions, SoundCloud.com/Chet-Knight)

COURTNEYS, THE: *Lost Boys*: Cassette

All-female three-piece from Vancouver, British Columbia, following their debut full-length with a cassette about the undead. The steady drums and effects pedals verge into less harsh Sonic Youth territory. Think the steady "Teenage Riot" build it, build it, build it climax of feelings until the chorus explodes and you're dancing alone in your room screaming "VAMPIRE TEENAGE BOYFRIEND!" over and over again with the beat, so loudly and with such passion that your mom thinks you have finally lost it. A+. —Alanna Why (Burger, burgerrecords@gmail.com, burgerrecords.org)

CREEPS, THE: *Eulogies*: CD/LP

How many bands is Skottie Lobotomy in? The Visitors, Crusades, and The Creeps? I'm sure I'm missing some. The point is that the dude is prolific. And while I didn't care for The Visitors, I love Crusades. Of the three vocalists for Crusades, Skottie's definitely my favorite, so I was curious to see what The Creeps would sound like. It's more like The Visitors, reminding me of a

lot of 1990s pop punk, although I can't quite put my finger on who exactly they sound like, which in my book is a good thing. Skottie utilizes the "woah-oh" to a fair degree, but it's not overdone. Lyrically, it's certainly more serious than The Visitors. While the lyrics are abstract, they're a little darker. I can still dig 'em, though. The biggest thing that struck me about *Eulogies* is how catchy it is. Within five listens I had a number of the songs stuck in my head. By ten listens I was singing them in the shower. Ten songs in twenty-seven minutes is the perfect length—just enough to make me want more. Ottawa does it again! —Kurt Morris (It's Alive)

CROISSANTS, THE:

We're in the Basement: 7"

The idea of leaving the audience wanting more taken to the extreme: there's more runoff groove than content on this one, what with less than ninety seconds of the title track and two sub-minute burners on Side B. Not a bad strategy, all told, as I'm curious to see where the band goes from here: buzzsaw three-chord punk pop with distinctly Dan Vapid-ish vox cutting through the din. —Michael T. Fournier (Hella Mad)

CRY!, THE: *Dangerous Game*: LP

This is just a damn fine glamy power pop record from this Portland, OR band. The sound is basically a middle ground between The Biters and The Exploding Hearts, but, of course, not nearly at the level of either of those

two bands. Still, a power pop record that even grabs my attention anymore is something noteworthy. It seems so simple: just write great songs that are catchy and full of hooks. Yet it seems that excellent songwriting, great vocals, and strong playing have somehow become one of the rarest beasts in all of current music. The Cry! write excellent power pop songs with great hooks. Highest possible recommendation. —Mike Frame (Taken By Surprise)

CUSTOM FIT: *Self-titled*: 12" LP

Female-fronted oi works for me. The focus here is good fucking music rather than all the macho baggage that can, unfortunately, come along with the scene. It's a sound reminiscent of late-'90s street punk bands like Reducers SF and One Man Army. This is street punk with a touch of soul and a bit of style. —John Mule (Chapter 11, chapterelevenrecords.com / Pirates Press, piratespress.com)

DAN PADILLA:

No Corporate Pizza: Picture Disc 7"

I don't eat corporate pizza. Sure, you can feed a family of four for little more than five bucks but is the intestinal distress and line to the bathroom really worth it? Dan Padilla firmly plant their feet down and declare *no*. Finally, a more accessible ideology; the people's slogan. The unabashed display of beer bellies on the flipside of the 7" matches the gruff pop punk delivered on both songs. After multiple listens, I'm left indifferent, but the picture disk homage

to Crass is nearly worth the purchase. —Ashley Ravelo (ADD, addrecs.com)

DAN SARTAIN: *Dudesblood*: CD

Dan Sartain's records are described as influenced by blues and rockabilly, and I can feel bits of that at points herein, but, for the most part, this record is a mixed bag of musical stylings that veer all over the ludic map (in a good way) and are sewn together through techno instrumentation. The record opens with the titular rave-up, making one think that we're in for a real raucous affair, but then Sartain yanks the rug of expectation out from under us and sends us on a meandering walking tour of the musical landscape. This is good, mind you. Highlights include Anthony Perkins' "Moonlight Swim" and the simplistically beautiful and almost childlike "Marfa Lights," which has a resonant and haunting quality to it—that song has stuck in my head for days, and I'm not upset about that. There is no sure way to describe this record since it doesn't fit neatly into any one style or genre (again, a good thing). About the closest I can get is to suggest that Sartain's musical concerns channel the spirit of Tom Waits—especially Waits's recent work—as a means of creating coherence through a variety of styles. Good stuff. —The Lord Kveldulfr (One Little Indian)

DAN WEBB AND THE SPIDERS:

Now It Can Be Told: CD

Ostensibly an album bringing together thirteen tracks from a variety of 7"

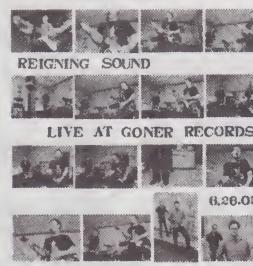


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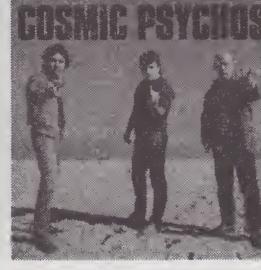
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MANATEES



Cat Food



singles, this is DWATS first long player since the 2012 reissue of *Oh Sure*. The collection serves as notice of the band's evolution from a 1990s college/indie rock quartet to something much more distinctive and less easy to classify (although still in an indie rock vein). There are a fistful of nuggets to be heard, including "On Fire," the one track I can provide a comparison for—Buddy Holly meets The Clash—and it's all done in a simple yet highly effective way. If you haven't heard the singles, then this is well worth picking up. If you have heard the singles, then get them all together in one place! Great cover artwork from Shawn C Higgins, too. —Rich Cocksedge (Self-Responsible, Bandcamp)

DAN WEBB AND THE SPIDERS:

Prost! 7"

This band should be huge. Huge. I feel like fans of labels as varied as the Dirtmap, In The Red, and Slovenly rosters (and, fuck it, all waypoints in between) should be eating this stuff for breakfast. And lunch and dinner. This band is excellent. Four songs of what could loosely be called garage rock, but tempered and restrained garage instead of unhinged and frenzied. And here's the thing: with DWATS, that restraint pays off. It works. The end result is a group of *mercilessly* catchy, solid songs that still retain just enough grit as to not be cloying. It's the little things that add facets of interest and allure here: the interlocking guitar lines in "Thirty," that dumb-brilliant melody

in "Hopelessbackandfourth," the buried keyboard stuttering throughout all of songs. Four tracks to add to an already awesome and extensive catalog. Do yourself a favor. —Keith Rosson (Gunner)

DAY CREEPER: *Raging Beast: 7"EP*

This EP from this three-piece out of Ohio manages to copy and paste jangly elements of '60s garage while weaving a twenty-first century flavor. Garage pop with marching drum percussion, "Turning into a Man" brings up shades of The Stones' *Some Girls* with scratchy male/female harmonization, while "Everybody Else" leans into an '80s power chord like Cheap Trick. "Zonin' Out" is part Animals, part Kinks with sloppy vocals that veer off key but don't feel contrived. "Virgin Desolation" slows it down a beat with a solid guitar hook that shimmies and sways to the finish line. An appetizer to their full length, *Hell Is Real*—this is Friday night dance party stuff. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Self-released)

DEADLY REIGN: *Slave: 7"EP*

Part of Profane Existence's onslaught of limited edition singles, this trio out of Austin, TX smolders. With members of World Burns To Death, Scarred For Life, and Till Death, their slice of d-Beat is crust and shoulders over the rest. These three tracks of pissed-off fuck you vocals and chainsaw guitar dirge start in with "Suffer," which ebbs right into "Sinister Minds," a double kick drum punk had a little charm, I must admit. This release doesn't sound anything like

security. "Employment of Slaves," adds to the anti-corp polemic on the problem of work, throwing in a sound bite of '80s guitar solo. Tight, melodic, and raging; they're rallying for a hanging and waving the torches. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Profane Existence)

DEADVIKINGS, THE:

Electric Demon: CD

I usually expect the grimmer side of the rock'n'roll spectrum from Zodiac Killer records. This is not grimy. The label must be trying to diversify. It works. This CD has all of the mandatory, rollicking rock energy. I don't want to say it's clean, because it's not clean. Maybe it's more focused. Maybe it's more precise. The Deadviking know exactly how to use their weapons. Not a single bass line meanders. The drums are going to beat on you so hard you're not going to be able to stop nodding your head. You're going to get slapped in the face with some rollicking guitar solos, and you're going to beg for more. You'll probably even try to sing along, and it will sound terrible. But you'll keep doing it, because you love it and you can't stop. —MP Johnson (Zodiac Killer, zodiackillerrecords.com)

DESTRUCTORS: *131313 – Malchance: CD*

I swear this is like the tenth Destroyors release I've reviewed and probably the best. The Destroyors were a second tier studs and spikes band back in the early '80s and their meat and potatoes plod punk had a little charm, I must admit. This release doesn't sound anything like

the band of old, but does boast some of the original members. This is speedy generic "punk" made by a bunch of fat fifty year olds. In the day and age of visceral, exciting punk bands across the globe, this is pretty much the last thing I need to hear. Their mangled version of "Eleanor Rigby" almost made my ears bleed. I'm sure there's an audience for this band at a prehistoric event like Rebellion Fest where they get to play alongside a bunch of other second rate bands from the early '80s. Me? I'll be hitting repeat on the Warthog disc. —Tim Brooks (Rowdy Farrago, Destroyors, destroyors.co.uk, antagonizersatl.com)

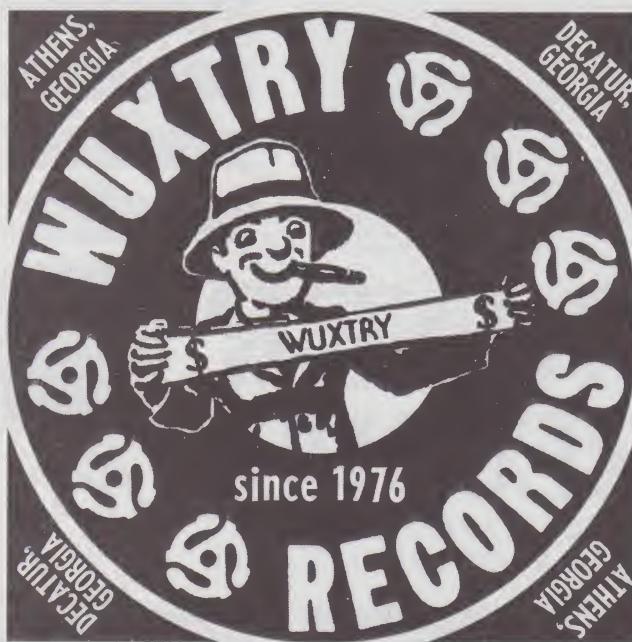
DIAS DE RADIO: *Self-titled: CD*

Above-the-pack, anthemic punk straight outta Guadalajara. Lyrically they're on the street punk tip, maybe a bit more politically astute than their average counterparts in the U.S., but musically they pack the tunes with simple leads that recall Peter And The Test Tube Babies more than The Virus or The Casualties. Was a bit surprised by what they delivered, which is never a bad thing, and the fact they do it well—not to mention they have the sense to make sure the two Caribbean-flavored tunes here didn't fall into some simple ska punk pigeonhole—makes it all the better. —Jimmy Alvarado (DDR Punx, bandmine.com/diasderadio)

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST:

Decomposition Fantasy: 12"

Grind/sludge/blast-beat wall of white noise tornado. Play it at 33 so your



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head doesn't burst before the Wire cover. —Chris Terry (Rorschach)

DISHRAGS, THE: *Three: LP*

I know that I am a broken record when it comes to spouting off about the rich history of punk rock in Canada. I can't help it. I obsess over it. From the well-known to the obscure, I love to learn about it all and records like this are a perfect way to fill my needs. The Dishrags were the first punk rock band from Victoria, BC (where I live). Three girls formed a band at the end of 1976, heard the Ramones, were changed forever, and by mid-1977 were in Vancouver to open for The Furies at that city's very first punk show. By the end of 1979, the original group had disbanded with only their track on the *Vancouver Complication* compilation and a 7" single on Modern Records. They would continue as a quartet for one more 7", but that is another story. Another original punk rock band lost to the sands of time... Almost. This record is made up of various unreleased studio recordings as well as some good quality live recordings (including their opening slot for The Clash in 1979). It's raw, primal punk that sounds amazing! Often these "unearthed tracks" kind of records end up sounding exactly like that, but not this. So good! The record also comes with a nice booklet full of photos, gig posters, and quotes from The Dishrags and those close to them. There were two parts of this record that really made me smile. The first one is the live song intro "This song is

called 'Bullshit,' and it's dedicated to our hometown of Victoria." Classic! The second, I have to ask: How tough do you have to be to finish your set with a ripping version of "London's Burning" when you are opening for The Clash? Tougher than you and me! —Ty Stranglehold (Supreme Echo)

DISSEKERAD: *Self-titled: LP*

There must be some kind of mistake here. The album cover says that the band here is Dissekerad but the songs sound strikingly similar to later period Totalitär. The singer for this band is even listed as Poffen. Is Poffen a common name in Sweden? Jokes aside, this really does sound an awful lot like Totalitär and the vocalist is in fact our old friend Poffen joined by fellow Swedish royalty (members of Makabert Fynd and Avskum, among others). So, as you may have already guessed, the sound is most certainly that of high octane Swedish crust / d-beat. I suppose you could say that the raspy vocal delivery is the distinguishing attribute between Poffen's old and new bands, but that's not to say Dissekerad doesn't hold their own or kick some serious ass. This is still some timeless and classic d-beat flawlessly performed by godfathers of the scene. All hail Poffen and Dissekerad. —Juan Espinosa (Man In Decline)

DIS-TANK: *D-Beat Machine: Cassette*

I loved this, but the mix is kinda crummy. I'm hoping that's merely a result of the cassette format and the

included download code will yield a better-sounding version. Dis-Tank sound like a cross of the U.K. Subs and early Discharge—eminently satisfying hardcore that grabs you by the throat and squeezes, hard, but it's got a few catchy hooks along the way. After each listen, I feel like I've been in a brutal fistfight during which I laughed the whole time I was getting my ass kicked. That's the mark of quality hardcore! The artwork for the tape may be a bit clichéd in its photographs of WWII-era tanks, devastated cities, and heaps of bones, but I'll let it go since I liked the music so much. Great work, guys! —The Lord Kveldulfr (Kibou)

DUDE JAMS: *How to Become a Famous Recording Artist: LP*

As much as I initially tried to make quick work of this record by dismissing it as trivial stoner fluff—the cover drawing is a monkey-headed, bong-holding, underwear-clad dude with bat wings standing under a rainbow and atop a gigantic cassette—I kept finding Shit of Value here and there, and getting frustratingly sucked back into it. I wanna say they sound a little like *Wiggle*-era Screeching Weasel without sounding one bit like The Ramones, but that might alienate any potential constituency they might hope to accrue, and is probably more by accident by design, anyway. So then I start thinking, okay, they kind of sound like a '90s pop punk band, back when '90s pop punk bands actually had something to them other than slavish devotion to formula,

I got 'em figured out... and then, out of left field, they chuck a brass section on the end of "Brainless," and it's fucking brilliant, so I'm thinking that if my listening experience is a chess game, they just yelled "checkmate" while I was counting my money while I was sitting at the table, even though there was time enough for counting when the dealin's done. **THIS ALBUM WILL CASTLE YOU ON THE QUEEN'S SIDE!** It will also smoke your van's quarterpanels. **BEST SONG:** "Brainless." **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Sleep Is the Enemy." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** In lieu of liner notes, the record features an essay called "How to Become a Famous Recording Artist... For Dummies," which is probably easily as funny as that book by the Phantom Surfers, *Rock Stardom for Dumbshits*. —Rev. Norb (ADD Records, dudejams.bandcamp.com)

DURBAN POISON:

Friday Night: VHS Single

Look here, Durban Poison: you have picked the single most impractical format for getting your music recognized, as most people in this day and age have long since chucked their VHS players into the garbage where they belong. However, lucky for you I still have mine and it wasn't unreasonably hard to set up. That being said, the title track "Friday Night" is a rocking little sleaze punk number dripping with the same kind of in-your-face attitude of the Neighborhood Brats, although it is a pity that the music is

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simply playing over a still photograph of the band because the rest of their video is a collection of live performances, vintage TV commercials, movies, and offstage antics edited amazingly well for a VHS tape. A female-led Humpers following suit nicely in rock-ability and recklessness. Enough of this retro format silliness and let's stick to the punkest of all formats: vinyl! —Juan Espinosa (Shake!, experienceshake.com)

EARTH GIRLS:

Wrong Side of History: 7"

All bands should listen to this record. Here is an example of a group of people getting all their ducks in a row and the end result being faultless. Earth Girls feature current and ex-members of Boilerman, Libyans, Broken Prayer, and Daylight Robbery but the music here is more reminiscent of the Shop Assistants, with a light, power pop effervescence that is easy on the ear and uplifting to the soul. It's been sometime since I've heard any band capture that whole C86 sound as well as Earth Girls do here. These four tracks deserve to be listened to on repeat under a warm sun whilst sipping on a couple of cold beers. —Rich Cocksedge (Grave Mistake, gravemistakerecords@gmail.com, gravemistakerecords.com / Drunken Sailor, drunksailorrecs@gmail.com, drunksailorrecords.co.uk)

EJECTOR SEATS, THE: ...Like Apple Pie...: LP

I hear all kinds of different influences when listening to this record, which is

a definite plus in my book. Sometimes, the '77 punk influence is most prevalent, harkening back to the gruff vocal approach of bands like Stiff Little Fingers. Other times, they sound very much like a warped modern take on the classic Orange County sound, maybe like a fucked up version of the much-revered band Smogtown. Other times, a more traditional hardcore influence can be heard. Honestly, I don't know what the hell is going on with this record, but I like it quite a bit. —Mark Twistworthy (Collision Course, collisioncourserecords.com)

EX FRIENDS: *Animal Needs: EP*

Ex Friends are "punk" lite, and as dull as watching paint dry. I keep wondering when this kind of stuff will die out, and it doesn't seem any time soon. Alas... —M. Avrg (Coolidge, coolidgerecords.com)

FLESH WOUNDS: *Bitter Boy: 7"*

North Carolina three-piece delivering garaged-out spaz punk, reminiscent of The Oblivians. All three jams are up-tempo with spat, growled-and-grit vocals. Listening without track names, I thought that closer "Let Me Be Clear" was actually called "Let Them Eat Kale." The cover art is just as good as the music—a skinny punk body with a horse head on top, amidst a sea of blood and chaos. Tight. —Alanna Why (Merge, mergerecords.com)

FOREVER PAVOT: *Self-titled: 7" EP*

Frantic City tosses in two bonus tracks on Émile Sornin's reissue of his first

EP. The original 2012 7" of space rock voodoo out of Paris cut, "Le penitent le passé" and "Christophe Colombe"—long haired, guitar-heavy tracks dusted with Hindi vocals. A year later, "Palestine" and "Sable Mouvant" are tossed into the mix, spiraling Pavot into the realm of Tame Impala's neo-psychadelic guitar buzz with vocals taking a back seat. One a '60s era hypnotic built to accompany a Mario Bava death scene, the other, a tidal wave of guitars like New Zealand's Kraus laced with violin. Sornin has since laid more vocals on his work, so pick this up for atmospheric soundtrack stuff. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Frantic City, franticcity.free.fr)

FORTY HELL'S:

Looking for Answers: 7"

Fist-waving, angry melodic punk rock that hearkens the Todd-penned Propagandhi tracks, or maybe more accurately, I Spy's melodic output, coupled with a Pegboy-esque groove and latter era Articles Of Faith. Dark, smart, passionate and well-delivered. Great stuff. —Dave Williams (Anything But Radio / Unsane Asylum / Rubber Factory)

FRANTIX:

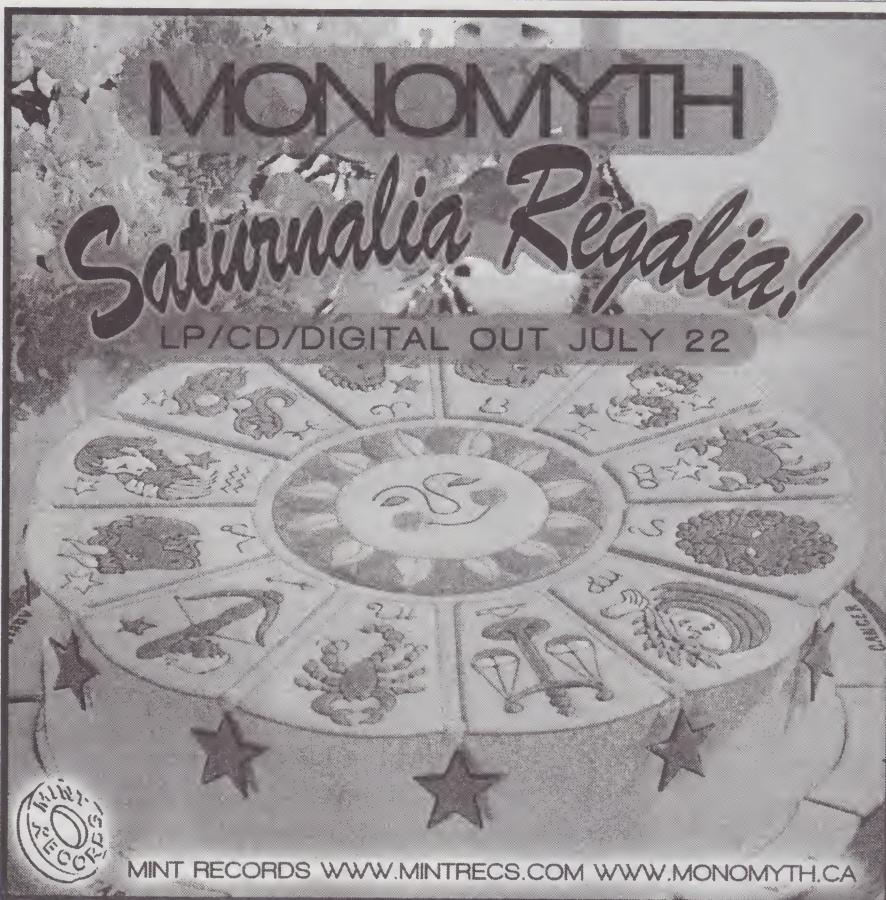
My Dad's a Fuckin' Alcoholic: CD

As many of the *Killed by Death* cabal of punk aficionados would be happy to attest, the title track to this retrospective honoring an obscure Colorado punk group is a superb slab of fucked-upness—sloppy playing, earworm-inducing riff, howling vocals, a mound

of grime just falling off and stinkin' up the entire place, and a chorus that just begs to be shouted full-lungs by everyone on the planet who's pissed off at their perpetually inebriated parental figure. The rest of the disc is no less swell: making appearances are both of their über-rare EPs, a demo that sounds just as blissfully chaotic as their official releases, and an off-the-board live recording that starts off with a cover of Pink Floyd's "Interstellar Overdrive," (real punks know the only true "punk" thing a band can do is bum other punks out by playing "hippie" proto-prog shit and this, with its free-form noise fest sandwiched between Barrett's memorable descending scale riff, has long been a prime pick on the "songs with which to bait a punk crowd" list), then descends into several tunes that flail and wail their way into your hearts before the whole shindig draws to a close with a live version of the aforementioned titular track. Throw in some great pics and liner notes and you have yourself a party, kids. —Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles, soundcloud.com/alternativetentacles)

FROM HELL: *Ascent from Hell: CD*

This is a ten-song, seventy-minute concept album featuring members of Down Factor, Testament, Slayer, and more. According to the album's liner notes, "The corpse of a psycho killer wakes up in hell and finds out he must go back to earth to find his soul that still lives on inside the body of a priest and drag it back into hell." You



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know, a typical problem for most of us. There are six characters in this album including my favorite, Nun with a Gun. Vocalist George Anderson sings for all six parts, so it requires following along in the liner notes to fully understand what's going on. I can understand the interest in the horror business, as it's something that goes along well with the genre, but the cynical jerk in me thought, "Really? This whole concept seems clichéd," while the diehard metal fan in me thought it worked well with the music. Musically speaking, there's a good mix of different styles of metal on here—thrash and death, primarily. Anderson's vocals range between death screams and melodic singing, which keeps the songs from becoming too redundant. With four of the songs coming in at over eight minutes each, some of this could certainly have been shortened while still getting across the theme. Nevertheless, it's a strong release and fans of this type of epic metal will definitely dig *Ascent from Hell*. —Kurt Morris (Scourge)

FUCKED UP: *Glass Boys*: 2 x LP

Total immersion. As Fucked Up continues to progress, you kind of fall *into* the records. Hardcore elites may have given up at some earlier point, but I await every Fucked Up release with bated breath, from the *Tommy* hardcore opera of *David Comes to Life* to the noise B-sides of the *Year of the ...* series. The new LP slow burns in the realm of those 12" singles first, then moves to parallel the intensity

of classics like "Two Snakes" and "Crooked Head" with *Glass Boys* "The Art of Patrons" and "Warm Change." The inclusion of a second "slow" copy of the same album seems like a hokey vinyl collector move at first, however listening to the same album with a completely different drumming speed is actually an interesting "artistic" foray. It does pose an issue when trying to choose which LP to lay down if you have favorite versions of songs on both records. If you're ready to lose yourself for an hour or two, *Glass Boys* comes highly recommended. —Matt Seward (Matador)

FUTURE VIRGINS:

"Late Republic" b/w "Centre": 7"

Well, last issue I went on some great lengths about how much I love this band. And these two songs do a plenty good job of supporting my case. They're short, upbeat, unconventional, and catchier than they really should be, considering their length. It's almost like they didn't have to repeat the chorus, because even though the needle picks up: the song is still playing in your head. Track this down. And don't be confused by the song titles. Neither of these songs are on the last LP. —Daryl (Self-released)

GEORGE SARAH: *Timelapse*: CD

Gloomy, ambient synth/computer-generated "industrial" fodder falling between the instrumental work of early Coil and maybe Doubting Thomas. It's well produced and very cinematic, but

aurally comes off more like a series of snapshots than a cohesive release. Wouldn't be surprised in the least if some of this stuff ends up being used in a film with creepy, jittery, high-res imagery. —Jimmy Alvarado (Flat Field, flatfieldrecords.com)

GIUDA: *Let's Do It Again*: LP

Put this Giuda record on in between Thin Lizzy and Slade and Milk 'N' Cookies and Elton John and Queen and feel the jean jackets and see the soft focus starlight effect on everything and pump your fist and go skating and grab a six-pack and get high and hang out and make out because it's the '70s and the world is incredible and stupid and it truly isn't gonna get any better. —Matt Werts (TKO, tkorecords.com)

GLOW GOD: *House of Distractions*: CD

A bit of a delay on this one, I know. See, I thought I'd lost the album, but discovered it again only recently when cleaning. Since the fine folks at Play Pinball are such great dudes, I couldn't in good conscience let this one go untouched. Now, on to Glow God: a grunge band (as much as I loathe using that term) from the depths of OKC, with their first long player. It's a consistent record of upbeat sludge-suckers, with a nod to the '90s. Most of the tracks, save "Could Be Worse," have a slightly less angry / evil-sounding Pissed Jeans thing going on. Or, if that's too vague, maybe a more straight-forward Cows. Glow God doesn't exactly belong on AmRep or anything. *House*

of Distractions is a streamlined punk record, for the most part. Which makes sense, since all other releases on this label are fine examples of how modern punk doesn't have to be a heaping pile of shit. —Steve Adamyk (Play Pinball, playpinballrecords.bigcartel.com)

GOOD LOOKIN' OUT: *This Is It*: LP

Good Lookin' Out present nineteen tracks of well played, but formulaic, post-youth crew revival from Poland. The breakdowns and gang vocals are all in the right places, and an emotional honesty pervades, but the album begins to feel bland not even half way through. Blandness aside, whether it is a language barrier (as the vocals are in English) or just typical hardcore vacuity, the lyrics really put this one in its coffin. The lyrics are fucking weak and suffer horribly from vagueness; they're just ardent declarations without any context, precluding any insight into whether these fellas have their heads about them or if they are just morons with thuggish anger. Also of note, one of the members is holding a lit cigarette on the cover, somewhat reminiscent of Erik Funk on that one Billingsgate 7", letting the world know that this ain't a straight edge band, despite all other indications to the contrary. —Vincent (Pasazer)

HARD GIRLS: *A Thousand Surfaces*: LP

Trios are typically concise. Their sound isn't muddied by multiple guitarists dueling over sonic superiority. Hard Girls are a prime example, subtle and perfected, like a fine wine produced

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from select, organic grapes, in a cultivated region, with a long maturation period. But they're inexpensive, rich with melody, and a sommelier's secret drink—the people's wine. They're the type of band that gets me out of the house, in my car, and at a show on a weeknight. The type of band that is both technically impressive, with tempo changes and deliberate riffage, yet seamlessly catchy, like Jawbreaker and The Weakerthans filtered through Guided By Voices and Dinosaur Jr. Hard Girls' eclecticism is highlighted by Jesse Michael's mind-bending album art. The opening song, "The Quark," begins with a strummed open chord and the declaration, "Space can never be erased," solidifying their philosophical approach. What follows are thirteen more sweltering jams that differ from head-on gut-punchers to tearjerkers and everything in-between, varied by the two distinct vocalists. The guitar playing is textural and searing, while the bass drives the central melody with its fuzzy Lou Barlow tone, and the frenetic drumming binds all of the elements together. With lyrics that run the gamut from literary to bleak humor, dream analysis to sci-fi, the sort of spectrum that ensures they're never pigeonholed. (Favorite line: "So we can all get high now, 'cause we'll never find a way to get by now.") Ultimately, Hard Girls are writing albums, not the same song, same progression, same tone over and over again, sidestepping the infinite loop of punk paint-by-numbers. Highly recommended. —Sean Arenas (Asian Man, asianmanrecords.com)

HEARTBURNS: *Cold Hell Below: 7"*

Dirty, rough, and fast. Light, poppy undertones and dripping with sticky, sweet, fun chord progressions, this band will make you wanna get off your ass and start dancing. This is fun, unpredictable, and perfection pressed into a wonderful four-song 7". —Genevieve Armstrong (Combat Rock Industry, combatrockindustry.net)

HI HO SILVER AWAY: *Chore: CD*

Whoa, shit. Wanna hear a story or ten about regret and penance? This DIY punk outta Santa Barbara feels so familiar, like the filthy Snuggie ya curl up into to work through some shit. Simon Sotelo elevates the mundane to haunting with her cover art. So good. —Jackie Rusted (It's Alive, itsaliverecords.com)

HOSPITAL JOB: *The Believer: CD/LP*

Hospital Job is fronted by Luke McNeill, drummer of Illinois champs The Copyrights, and also features members of Horrible Things, who have been near the top of my pop punk list since about halfway through the first song I heard by them. Accordingly, *The Believer* is an anthemic blast more than worthy of its pedigree. Eleven tracks of tight, melodic pop punk with as many singalong choruses as whoa-ohs and group harmonies. Not to say that these guys stick to the mold of one of punk's most formulaic sub-subgenres—there are enough quirky chord changes and oddball fills to keep listeners on their toes. In fact, the album's high point

may also be its most unexpected. "The Scrivener" dials back the four-on-the-floor energy in favor of a slow, dreamy swell that breaks at just the right moment. Don't take this the wrong way, but remember when Blink-182 started getting really, really weird? This is like what it could have been like if that had worked out shockingly well for them. That's an alternate universe I wouldn't mind living in. —Indiana Laub (It's Alive, info@itsaliverecords.com, itsaliverecords.com / Insubordination, chrisi@insubordinationrecords.com, insubordinationrecords.com)

INFERNO: *Pioneering Work - Discography: 2 x CD*

As in life, the annals of hardcore are filled with bands that were good, fewer bands that were great, and maybe a handful that just went above and beyond the rest and ended up with a singular sound that one can say, "that's ____," when a tune comes on. Germany's Inferno handily falls within the latter. From their introduction to U.S. punkers via their tracks on MRR's *Welcome to 1984* and Pushead's *Cleanse the Bacteria* comps, it was clear these cats were working on a whole different level from the pack of generic thrashers then glutting the market. Like legendary DC band Void, Inferno's brand of revved-up hardcore contained copious amounts of metal and sly hooks buried under all the *Sturm und Drang*. Inferno delivered their tunes at velocities that made 'em

sound like they were always on the verge of completely falling apart, yet somehow never quite doing so and, in some cases, oddly enough sounded tight in their borderline chaos. This American pressing of their collected works pulls together fifty-six tracks from assorted albums, splits, EPs and comps spanning the years 1984-92 spread over two discs, and throws in a thirty-two page booklet with the band's history, flyers, and English translations of their lyrics for good measure. There are some strange differences in the re-mastering from the originals (the intro to "Steinkopf," has been inexplicably excised, for example), but that shouldn't dissuade fans of the genre from reveling in the fast 'n' spastic thrash these cats unleashed. To paraphrase something Pushead once wrote in a review of one of the band's releases, plop this into the player and explode. —Jimmy Alvarado (Beer City, beercity.com)

KIDNAPPERS: *Pills: 7" EP*

Wow, been a helluva long time since I last heard anything from these cats. Sound is a bit darker over the first two tunes, more in line with, say, *Overnight Lows* than *Modern Action*. Nonetheless, though, ye find yerself bobbing along, and by the last tune they've thrown the swagger back in the mix and you know yer back on familiar terra. Nice visit. Hope they come sit a spell a bit more often. —Jimmy Alvarado (Secret Mission, secretmissionrecords.com)

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KINGONS / MAXIES, THE:

Objector: CD

Match made in heaven on this split. Both bands have an affinity for chunky pop punk and cheeky concepts. If this were a wrestling match, I'd have to say the Maxies win on the strength of "It's Too Damn Hot Where You Come From," which already gets my vote for song of the summer. —Garrett Barnwell (It's Alive, itsaliverecords.com)

KLH: Matando Idolos: CD

A fairly brutal bunch from Mexico City showing lots of respect for mid-'80s breakdown-heavy HC but taking it a bit louder and faster, like MDC with a little more polish. —Lisa Weiss (Puercords)

LA PESTE:

"Better Off Dead" b/w "Black": 7"

From what I've been able to gather, La Peste are an overlooked trio from Boston that never released a proper LP, but are nonetheless remembered for the handful of jams they recorded during their brief existence. First off, Wharf Cat's reissue is spot-on, with a reprinted show flier insert and an additional photograph of the group. On the insert, Mission Of Burma's Roger Miller provides a quote, which is fitting, as I can assume from these two brief tracks, that La Peste's musical trajectory might have further coincided with these fellow Bostonian luminaries. "Better Off Dead" is definitely the hit. It opens with guitar and some chiming on the cymbals. For

being over thirty years old, the song is urgent and still slyly tongue-in-cheek. The jangly guitar tone conjures bands across the pond like Gang Of Four, Wire, and Zounds. "Black" is more avant-garde and, frankly, less effective. It doesn't hold up nearly as well as the pogo-inducing jam on the opposite side. This 7" wasn't reissued to cash in on nostalgia, rather because La Peste were truly ahead of the curve and well-worth revisiting or appreciating for the first time. —Sean Arenas (Wharf Cat, wharfcatrecords.com)

LAENGTHENGURTHE:

An Uncomfortable Amount of...: CD

Anthology of recordings spanning the years 2001-2011 from this inveterate grindcore/metal band from Boise, ID. The consistent cookie monster vocals make the seventy-three tracks on this CD a bit much to take in one sitting but decent in small doses. Kudos for the awesome song titles, though. My favorite? "She Slipped in the Shower Attending to Her Needs." —Garrett Barnwell (1332, 1332records.com)

LIVEFASTDIE: Hitstains: LP

Who doesn't appreciate an album name written in what can only be presumed as shit smeared on the front cover minus the "s"? *Hitstains* is a singles comp of NY punk band LiveFastDie from 2005-2008, before calling it quits in 2009, with various turds and tidbit goody releases that they prolifically spewed out within such a short time span. If you're

not familiar with LiveFastDie, it's straight-up, blown-out garage rock; think an American Teengenerator. Back cover has a nice little write up on the chronology of this twenty-one song LP, giving us a clue on all the shit-tacular happenings surrounding their short-lived escapades. LiveFastDie, I mean, yeah, they lived up to their name; it's the shit. —Camille Reynolds (Almost Ready)

LOS GATOS NEGROS: Self-titled: LP

It's difficult to describe the electricity I felt withdrawing this record from the *Razorcake* review bin. It clicked instantly what I held in my hands, but I have to think back to my sophomore year in high school to get the feeling just right. I used to download copious amounts of music in my graphic design class. One day, I discovered that a senior was doing the exact same thing on our shared computer, except he was downloading the artists that I intended to pirate in the first place: Defiance, Ohio, Japanner, Andrew Jackson Jihad and a mysterious group that flew under my radar—Los Gatos Negros. With my flash drive, I stole the stolen songs. Eventually, that senior became one of my closest friends and Los Gatos Negros' ten-song album remained one of my favorite little gems all the way up until the present. Some eight years later, Plan-It-X has finally gotten around to pressing these tasty tunes on vinyl and, although I'm biased, it's probably the most important record to be released this century. Who are these black cats, you ask? I'm not permitted to share. Maintaining their secrecy is of the utmost importance, but these pranksters have graced us with a beautiful comic book zine detailing their means of deconstructing the manacles of modern society. How do these playful anarchists intend on doing this, you wonder? It should be obvious: Through the power of electrified instruments and costumed dance punk. You have one more question, do you?

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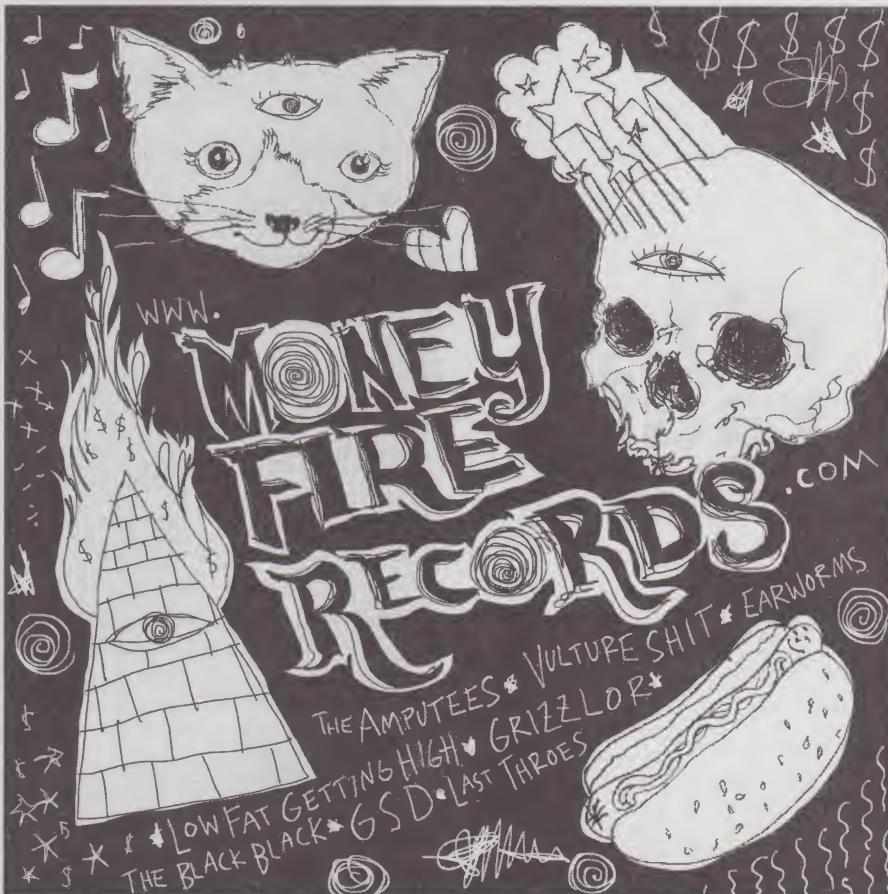
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What time is it? "It's time to get down! It's time to get busy!" —Sean Arenas (Plan-It-X, plan-it-x.com)

LOUD ONES, THE: *Time to Skate*: CD

I love skate rock. It all goes back to reading *Thrasher* magazine at the age of thirteen. There weren't many places to skate in the dead of the Canadian winter, so I would sit around in my room with my *Thrashers*, pouring over every single word and photo as my fingertips would get blacker and blacker from the ink on the newsprint. I would read "Pus Zone" and "Notes from the Underground" and learn about a huge subculture of punk and hardcore bands comprised of skaters. I quickly started searching out bands such as The Faction, JFA, and Drunk Injuns. Worlds collided. My teenage mind was blown. Songs about skating by skaters! A huge part of my life (to this day) was formed. Back then, I never had the chance to hear The Loud Ones. I'm sure I'd heard that Alva pro Fred Smith III had been in a band, but it had always eluded my ears until now. What we have here is a reunited Loud Ones recording some of their old classics, along with some new tunes. While projects like this can be dicey at best, I am incredibly happy to say that this album is amazing! It may have been recorded in 2012, but they sound like a skate rock band that has been in a time capsule since 1984. I can't tell which are the old songs and which ones are new. It's just pure guitar shred and snotty, ridiculous songs about skating.

I love this so much! As if that wasn't enough, the disc also includes their original demos from 1983 and 1985 and some live tracks from 1984. Add cover art by Bobby Brown (one of the best skate artists in the biz today) and you've got one hell of a package! —Ty Stranglehold (Beer City)

LUBRICANTS: "Activated Energy" b/w "Transformation Vacation": 7"

Self-identifying as "Milwaukee's first punk band" (I guess I'll take their word for it), this 1980 single is the band's sole release during their lifespan, and is pretty much jacked in to the subversive current emitted by the death of '70s punk which, Frankenstein-like, begat hardcore somewhere after the new wave ebb tide of 1980. "Activated Energy," doesn't seem too far removed, spiritually, from songs like "Intensified Chaos," off the *Not So Quiet on the Western Front* album a few years later, although, tempo-wise, things are still grounded in '70s neo-orthodoxy. It also features female backing vocals for a last gasp of that eyeshadowed siren sound, right before girls were purged from the scene at the start of 1982. "Transformation Vacation," is more or less more of the same, minus the backing vocals and the high-end-heavy James Williamson guitar wig-outs of the flip. I read this band's viscosity at twelve seconds using a #3 Zahn cup, and that's the sign of a quality varnish.

BEST SONG: "Activated Energy." BEST SONG TITLE: "Transformation Vacation." FANTASTIC AMAZING

TRIVIA FACT: I saw the Lubricants for the first time last year and then I puked all over the Turner Hall bathroom floor. —Rev. Norb (Rerun, rerunrecordsstl.com)

MADISON BLOODBATH / WORTHWHILE WAY:

The Moon in the Darkness: Split 10"

Madison Bloodbath: The dominant vocalist is a dead ringer for Bob Mould's primal howl, including his penchant for bursts of full-bodied aggression interlaced with heart-sinking hooks. In fact, the entire production conjures *Zen Arcade* in that it's raw yet incredibly listenable. The guitar leads are never overtly upbeat or overplayed, but tastefully textured. My only ding is that they sometimes verge on cheeseball because of the gruff Muppet-y vocalist that chimes in too often. Constipated gang vocals in pop punk must be destroyed. Worthwhile Way: Ditch the Prozac and get a prescription of Worthwhile Way from Japan. Their brand of unabashed positivity filtered through country twang and open chord folkiness will greatly increase your serotonin levels. Lyrics like "Children are singing merrily" and "Life is enjoying what you have" will have you shedding your cynicism faster than a horny teenager's slacks at senior prom. Their four-song contribution isn't sappy or cloying but genuinely endearing and maturely written pop balladry. I'm smitten. —Sean Arenas (ADD, addrecs.com / Eager Beaver, eagerbeaver.shop-pro.jp)

MANGES, THE: *All Is Well*: CD

Italy's pop punk sweethearts. Oddly enough, a friend of mine gave me a copy of the Japanese pressing of this disc not too long ago, so I was already quite familiar with it when it came to my mailbox for review. It may surprise some people to know that I'm not completely into modern pop punk. Crystal clear production and Marshall stacks aren't exactly my idea of how it's done. Thankfully, The Manges have their own thing going for them, which they do quite well. The guitars on *All Is Well* are thin and shrill (re: cool sounding), which isn't something you'll normally hear in this genre. The drums are compressed to the max, but are tight as all hell, as the band is normally. I've never had a chance to catch them live, but I imagine they're a real blast in person. "Panic at the Ice Rink" is an obvious favorite. A few of their last releases have passed me by, but it's nice to see bands that can stay afloat and keep it going. —Steve Adamyk (It's Alive, itsaliverecords.com)

MANGES, THE: *Plan Honolulu*: 7"

Italian pop punk single with an A-side swiped from the album *All Is Well*. Eighty-eight seconds of straight-ahead smile punk with energy that transfers to the flip side for the previously unreleased "I'm Giving Up." A definite must for fans of The Queers and Screeching Weasel. I want my hands on that full-length. —Alanna Why (One Chord Wonder, ocw.records@gmail.com, ocwrecords.bandcamp.com)

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MEATMEN, THE:

Savage Sagas from the Meatmen: CD

Just when you think Tesco Vee's bag of tricks has surely run dry, he jerks off in it and fills it anew with songs that would make your parents really angry. Hell, they might even make you feel uncomfortable. Speaking of bags, check out this line from "Big Bloody Booger on the Bathroom Wall": "Sprayed va-jj juice in my bag of Taco Bell. Loves me some fish tacos, so what the hell?" The Dutch Hercules's voice is just as growly and greasy as ever, and the tunes rock just fine. The band even veers away from their standard punk rock'n'roll into country territory for "The Ballad of Stinky Penis": "He crept across the desert sand, a fetid wiener in his hand." Everyone needs at least one Meatmen record in the collection to make parties strange, and this is just as good as any. —MP Johnson (Self Destructo)

MIGHTY FEVERS, THEE / MORBEATS: *Weird Affairs and Teengeneration*

Accidents: Split 7"

Holy fuck. Thee Mighty Fevers just kicked the ever-lovin' Teengenerate out of me. In point of fact, I think they just kicked the ever-lovin' Teengenerate out of the entire neighborhood. I'm not sure why there aren't more cops outside. Holy fuck. On the flip, the Morbeats kicked me square in the fucking Registrators ((which is an odd place to kick me, since they're the ones who are doing the Teengenerate cover)). This isn't the first record I've ever gotten that came equipped with

a complimentary pair of earplugs, but it might be the first one where I was panicked enough to actually consider using them. In the immortal words of Andrew Dice Clay, "what was in those bombs, fuckin' fertilizer?" Fuck Kobe Bryant—Kobe, Japan is where it's at!!! BEST SONG: Thee Mighty Fevers, "Emotion Fire." BEST SONG TITLE: Teengenerate, "Sex Cow." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I got #89 out of one hundred pressed and that was Dave Robinson's jersey number. —Rev. Nørø (One Chord Wonder, ocw.records@gmail.com)

MODERN PETS:

"B.I.Y.S." b/w "Sweet Frustration": 7"

A double-hit shot of Modern Action/Dirtmap-styled punk strut, all dual-guitar attack and peacock strut. —Jimmy Alvarado (Modern Pets, modernpetsuck.blogspot.de)

MORNING GLORY: *War Psalms: CD*

This is Ezra Kire's, of Leftover Crack, third full length release with this band. Melodic punk. The musicianship is there. But overthought and overproduced, this album ends up sounding kind of... I dunno... hollow. Best Song "Standard Issue." —Jackie Rusted (Fat Wreck Chords, fatwreck.com)

MYSTERY SQUAD:

Strange Creatures: Cassette

A band from Saskatoon, Canada! After all these years, do you know how many bands I've encountered

from Saskatchewan? Almost none. Even after playing there a number of times. So, let's just say I was a little excited to see what the Prairies have given us. First off, it's an excellent looking product. Major label quality, pro-released cassette, shrink wrap and all. Oh, and it's a full album worth of content. All I'm saying is, if I mail-ordered a cassette and wound up with this, I'd be fairly impressed. Some humans will tell you packaging isn't important. Well, it fucking is. I'm impressed. Oh, and there's music on it, too. While I typically pride myself on band comparisons, I had a hard time with this release. It's melodic hardcore, for sure. Anthem-filled, chant-along punk rock. A little tougher sounding than most of your average Epitaph bands. Off With Their Heads meets Slapshot, maybe? A part of me wants to say Pennywise or even Jughead's Revenge, but I'm not going to go quite that far. Slick-sounding '90s style punk, with a 10" to be released sometime in the future. —Steve Adamyk (Wasted Wax, wastedwaxrecords.com)

NAP EYES: *Whine of the Mystic: LP*

I listened to a couple Nap Eyes songs before they rolled through my town on that fateful April night. I thought that they were all right, but something magical happened live that made the Halifax four-piece click in my (and everyone else's) chemically altered brain. I don't know what it was exactly, but the people started to mosh, and then honest to goodness *dance*, as if we were

all in the final musical number at the end of some high school teen movie. Nap Eyes play chilled-out, heavy on the pedals, make out slacker-core of the indie-tinged variety (there are not one but two songs over seven minutes). If you're a fan of The Modern Lovers, you are going to lose your shit for this. It's not a carbon copy, but the Jonathan Richman feel-good spirit is all over this record. Top ten of the year no question, if not in the goddamn top five. —Alanna Why (Plastic Factory, plasticfactoryrecordco@gmail.com, plasticfactoryrecordco.tumblr.com)

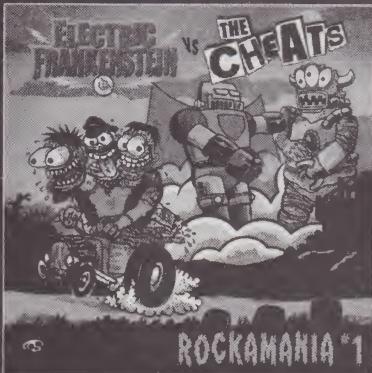
NEVILLE STAPLE: *Ska Crazy: CD*

Former frontman of the infamous two-tone ska band, The Specials, the Original Rudeboy is back and as rude as ever with his newest release, *Ska Crazy*. Paying homage to Prince Buster, Max Romeo, and The Slackers, as well as echoing The Specials' hit "Ghost Town" with "Roadblock," Neville Staple reminds us that he is as important to the scene as ever. This album has been done wonderfully and I suggest all first wave and two-tone ska fans pick up a copy. —Genevieve Armstrong ([Cleopatra, cleorecs.com](http://cleopatra.cleorecs.com))

NIGHT BIRDS: *Monster Surf: 7"*

Let's face it, there is no shortage of gushing positive reviews for Night Birds records. I'd be hard pressed to think of a more universally loved band that has come out in the last few years and it is well deserved. Night Birds make hardcore punk rock with many

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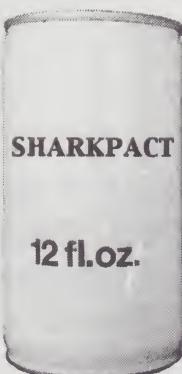


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of the elements of the legendary bands of yesteryear without coming off like a pale imitation. They continually keep it fresh. One thing that everyone jumped on to right away was the heavy surf vibe. It's not a sound that gets a lot of play in hardcore these days and Night Birds really nail it. It seems only logical that they would want to do an instrumental surf punk record and here it is. Monster Surf is exactly what its title says it is. Short blasts of shimmering guitar with creepy-crawling bass and rock solid drums. Sprinkle in some synth and a few horns here and there and you've got yourself a genuine monster party on the beach! I'm going to just cut to the chase. I love this band. You love this band. You'll want to own this record. If you don't dig Night Birds, I've gotta give you a sideways stare and I'll always wonder deep down what the hell is wrong with you. -Ty Stranglehold (Wallride)

NOISE / STREET DOGS: Split: 10"

Noise are probably going to be the next Rancid. I'm being totally serious. If this band doesn't have a deal with a huge label within the next two years I will be amazed. They write these really catchy songs that get stuck in your head immediately but are still intelligent and lyrically driven enough to warrant delving deeper into. They are usually on the Cock Sparrer / Blitz tip with a West Coast vibe in the backbeat, but these three songs really show them coming into their own. Their story is great, they are nice, humble dudes,

and I honestly can't say enough nice things about them. The Street Dogs are still the Street Dogs. They write simple street punk songs that are like a poppy version of Forced Reality. Mike is and always has been a great frontman, but at the end of the day I will forever hold them to the standard of the first Dropkick record (but who cares because those guys don't need my help selling records). Just make sure that if you get this record for Street Dogs to FLIP IT OVER AND LISTEN TO NOI!SE. -Ian Wise (Pirates Press, piratespressrecords.com)

NOSECOME PROPHETS / SHATTERHAND: Split: 7"

Nosecome Prophets: Hmm. Rather forgettable, awkward skatpunk with confusing atonal breakdowns and weak vocals. Shatterhand: see the Nosecome Prophets description, add "unoriginal leads" and you'd be on the right track. Blah. -Dave Williams (Unsan Asylum)

NOW PEOPLE:

Love, Sex, Death & the Weather: LP

Atlanta, Georgia's label No Breaks seems to be my go-to lately for hook-driven punk music with a glob of rapid-fire, snot-laced vocals. Now People continues their winning tradition. (North Trolls, Shang-A-Lang, and The Max Levine Ensemble are also in their exceptional back catalog.) Now People play methodical pop punk with some post-grunge chugginess with the occasional

tasteful acoustic guitar detour. The songs are short and diverse—my two favorite attributes of any record. My only gripe is that the B-side is lacking in comparison to the catchy jams on the first half of the record. Side note: Mikey Erg contributes guitar on "A New Pedigree" so add this record to Mr. Erg's already extensive résumé of memorable punk records. Recommended. -Sean Arenas (No Breaks, order@nobreaksrecords.com)

ONLY CRIME: *Pursuance: LP/CD*

At last! Only Crime has finally released an album worthy of its constituent parts. I don't like the phrase "supergroup," but when you have members of Descendents, Good Riddance, Bane, and Modern Life Is War in a band then expectations are bound to be high. Previous releases have been okay but not to a level that would get me excited enough to buy tickets for a school night 250 mile round trip to see the band, but *Pursuance* did that after just a handful of plays. This has the clout you'd expect with Bill Stevenson behind the drums and the twin guitars add a hefty wall of sound to proceedings. I also believe that Russ Rankin's vocals are better in Only Crime than they are in Good Riddance, which is a major plus point, too. The expected synergy has been realized, resulting in some exceptional melodic hardcore—all killer, no filler. -Rich Cocksedge (Rise, riserecords.com)

PEOPLE'S TEMPLE, THE: *Musical Garden: LP*

These Michigan based garage-pop aficionados have previously taken underground rock circles by storm with two absolutely solid-as-bricks releases, and this, their third full-length, continues that trend and does not disappoint. If equal parts psyche influenced contemporary garage rock and part '60s rock'n'roll fuzz don't intrigue you, the vocal harmonies and excellent songwriting by the two pairs of brothers who make up the band will grab your attention and not let go. Recommended. -Mark Twistworthy (HoZac, hozacrecords@gmail.com)

PISS PISS PISS: *Never Heard of Amebix: CDEP*

There's been a solid trend of coming across releases that show little effort has been put into the layout, but recordings have clearly had some time (and money) put into them. In walks Piss Piss Piss. Who, given the minimal hand-drawn artwork of a fox (?) spray painting the name of the record on a brick wall, I assumed this was going to be a crud-punk record of some sort. Instead, it's well-recorded, ripping metallic d-beat—probably better than a lot of popular bands of the same ilk. They wear their hometown of PDX on their sleeves, sounding strikingly close to Hellshock, with the token extra guttural vocals. Wasn't expecting that all with the packaging, but I'm into it. -Steve Adamyk (Sacred Plague, sacredplague)

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PRINCE: Self-titled: CD

In a perfect world, Tom DeLonge would not have strayed from his bleached-blond hair and willingness to perform in his briefs to the pretentious front man of U2 tribute band, Angels And Airwaves. Sadly, we don't live in a perfect world, but we do have bands like Prince to help fill the carefree, tongue-in-cheek pop punk void. The vocals are power-stanced firmly in the forefront, a practice I always appreciate. Sung nasally and loud, the lyrics aren't poetry—but they don't have to be. Sarcastic lines like "I'll keep you forever in my...phone" had me laughing to myself. Recommended for the teenager in you who always wanted to crowd surf at Warped Tour. —Ashley Ravelo (ADD, addreecs.com)

PSYCHIC BAGS:***Our Friends Call Us Horse: Cassette***

These cats know their scuzz: tons of echo, tons of reverb, not tons of chords. My wife heard this one and said, "It sounds like they should be playing behind chicken wire" and I tend to agree: the perfect soundtrack for flying bottles, sawdusty floors, and drunken mistakes. —Michael T. Fournier (Magnetic South, magneticsouthrecordings.org)

RABBIT HOLES: "It's Not Alright" b/w "I Ain't Coming Back Tonight": 7"

Man, I'm getting cynical. Every part of me as a critic thinks this record is nothing new. At a certain point, the diminishing returns of reviewing records every few months shows you

that there is only a limited number of tools for musicians to use to make their art. There are only twelve notes, you know? But this record gets everything right. The music is recorded in that beautifully terrible way where the vocals are buried, becoming just another instrument in the mix. I suppose if there's a key to my heart musically, that would be it. Layers of musical noise with a small hint of melody shimmering in the background. Songwriting-wise, I'd put Rabbit Holes in that category of Dirtmap hopefuls that never fails to capture my ears. Both songs are incredibly well-written, with Side A capturing a Buzzcocks before they lost their edge vibe, and Side B imitating the Ramones back when Tommy was behind the kit. Totally worth any price between three and six dollars. Grade: A-. —Bryan Static (Big Action, bigactionrecords.net)

RAD PAYOFF: Self-titled: 7"

A garage rock record with a driving, pounding rhythm, minimalist guitars, and improvisational-style vocals over the top. Oh, and it's 45, not 33. —Chad Williams (No Breaks, nobreaksrecords.com)

RAD PAYOFF: *The Good, the Rad and the Ugly: Cassette/LP*

Goddamn! This is what reviewing is about: getting a package in the mail containing a new band that absolutely blows me away. Depending on the song, Rad Payoff could be mistaken for arena rock-era Rye Coalition, a mathy Dischord band, and/or Swiz. (Self-released)

Insane stop-on-a-dime musicianship which is never pretentious or precious, serious grooves, and humor (witness "The Bong Remains The Same"), all with shouted vox from a guy whose vocals chords are obviously the strongest muscles in his body. This is the best music I've gotten for review in the past year. Seriously. Featuring a member of Sass Dragons, if you need more ammo. —Michael T. Fournier (Let's Pretend)

RANDUMBS, THE:***The Triumphant Return of: 7"***

These songs come fast and don't stop. I was worried that my turntable would crap out if I tried to stop the wheel too abruptly. Even though the Randumbus have been going at this punk rock thing for a while now, releasing their streetpunk classic *It's About Time* in 1998, this sounds like a band that is far from throwing in the towel. Whatever it is that one is supposed to have, The Randumbus have it in spades. —John Mule (Chapter 11, chapter11records.com)

RESPECT THE RICH: *I Love Rich: CD*

Of the eight tracks on this compact disc, three of them are called "(You're so Hot) I'm Gonna Fuck You with the Lights On." There is the original version, the Spanish version, and the clean radio version. Everything about this CD makes me want to want to ask, "Why?" From the cartoon cover to the butt-rock solos, this feels like someone's midlife crisis. —John Mule (Self-released)

REVENGE OF THE PSYCHOTRONIC MAN: *Still Getting Pissed, Still Talking Shit, Still Dancing Like Idiots: 7"*

These prolific U.K. punks are celebrating their ten-year anniversary with a nostalgic 7", starting off with two new recordings of old tunes. The tracks don't break any new ground, but they do prove that these guys are still tearing it up impressively hard and fast a decade later. I'm hearing less skate punk influence than on their last record—this is more straight-up English punk rock for the drunk and rowdy. As if to confirm this, the second song is a genuine streetpunk banger, the kind with literal "oi oi oi's at the end of every line. I didn't know they still made 'em like that, but I can get behind it. And then... there's Side B. This features two electronic/drum-and-bass remixes of what I must assume are other selections from the Psychotronic catalogue. I mean full-on Transplants-style punk fusion, but less terrible. I'm not entirely sure that any of this was necessary, but it's funny as hell and, on occasion, weirdly good. Honestly, these remixes are more interesting than the standard-issue punk rock B-sides would have been. These guys aren't afraid of getting a little stupid, and I can respect that. —Indiana Laub (TNS, info@tnsrecords.co.uk, tnsrecords.co.uk)

REVOLUCIONARIOS, LOS:**Self-titled: CD**

Metallic Mexican (or at least what I can find about them) says they hail from the state of Coahuila) crust with the obligatory grandiloquent sound

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and lyrical content. *Waaaay* too much metal pumped into the tunes for my taste, but I imagine the black clothes 'n' backpatch crowd will find much here to get 'em in a tizzy. —Jimmy Alvarado (Los Revolucionarios, facebook.com/losrevolucionariosofficial)

RIOTS, THE: "One Seven Wonders" b/w "On the Run": 7"

I may be behind the curve in asking this, but is Russia the home of the next punk uprising? There's Pussy Riot, that group of badass girls getting arrested in churches, selling shirts to hipsters who have never heard one of their songs, and then there is The Riots. If The Jam were from Moscow, it would sound like The Riots. That is to say, it would sound amazing. Nice work, comrades. —John Mule (Time For Action, timeforaction.de)

RIUTAL CONTROL: "No Affinity": 7"

Members of No Statak playing heavy and paranoid hardcore with a crusty backbeat. This has got a His Hero Is Gone feel in the riffs and heaviness but is more straightforward and these folks aren't afraid to break it down. They speed up on occasion, but they never break the sound barrier and it seems like they aren't willing to sacrifice their heaviness for speed. One of the best debut 7's I've heard in a while. —Ian Wise (Residue, ritual-control.bandcamp.com)

RUBELLA BALLET: "Planet Punk": CD

Rubella Ballet's one of those bands that, although quite influential on the

U.K. anarcho-punk and early goth sub-subcultures, are a bit obscure these days to the average punter that wasn't actively immersed in punk during the '80s or is a bit of an archivist. Their dayglo-splattered take on peace punk stood in stark contrast to the "black is fab" fashion etiquette normally associated with that set and their music similarly added a hint of, oh, bounce while addressing much of the same subject matter of their peers. Their first full-length of wholly new material since 1990, *Planet Punk* doesn't stray too far sonically from the band's previous efforts, meaning they still tweak the '80s peace punk template by adding bits of influences from outside sources and slather on a bounty of relevant media sound bites while the lyrics remain firmly rooted in addressing topical issues: the consolidation of power by moneyed interests, the global "Big Brother" surveillance state, the dark side of biomedical research, Hacktivism, the overreliance on pharmaceutical prescriptions, Mexico's drug wars, police corruption, conspiracy theories, widespread political corruption, and the belief in punk as a viable form of resistance to all the above. I've honestly been feeling a bit cynical and fatalistic about the state of both punk and the planet in recent weeks—feelings that are inevitable to come up at various points when one has been around long enough to see both change for the worse in a lot of ways on more than one occasion—but while listening to this, I felt that glimmer of hope that, no matter

how bleak shit gets, folks will continue to resist and address that which the rest of the population prefers to pretend isn't happening. —Jimmy Alvarado (Overground, overgroundrecords.co.uk)

RUBRICS / ABOLITIONIST: "Split": 7"

Rubrics: Killer, very Crimpshrine/Fifteen-y dual male/female crusty melodic punk rock with great, fitting, anarchist hippie peace punk lyrics. Lots of Grimble in there, too. Fans of that world (of which there's no shortage) would do very well to seek this out. I know I'll be spinning it plenty. Abolitionist: Three more great tracks from these smart, prolific Portlandians. Fast, furious, catchy skatepunk in a Propagandhi-meets-Strike Anywhere vein with lyrics reminiscent of *Less Talk*-era Chris Hannah. Terrific. This is a split release between ten different labels from around the planet and comes with a great handwritten fold-out lyric sheet that looks fresh from a Food Not Bombs info table. Awesome stuff all around. —Dave Williams (1859 / Get Better / Drunken Sailor / Different Kitchen / Waterslide / Bonfire Club / Reality Is A Cult / Lost Cat Records / Fly The Light / Hahaha Cool!)

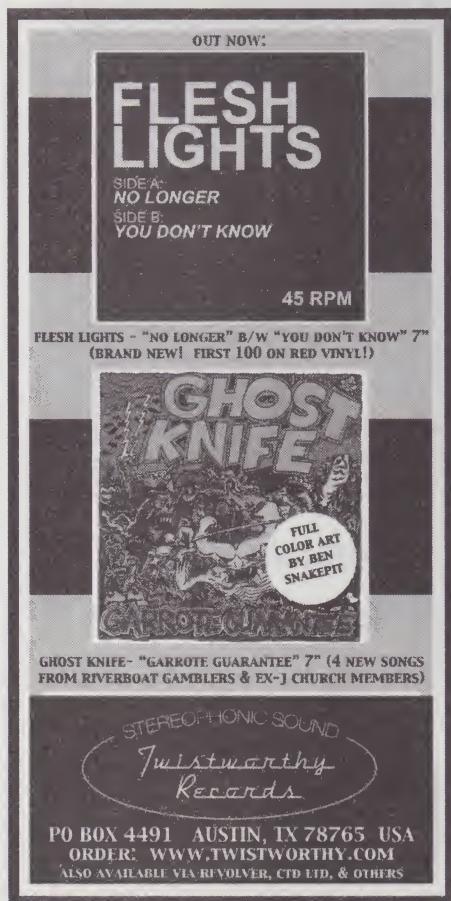
RYAN DINOSAUR: "Demo": 7"

Say there was a car accident that got hit by a train that suffered from paranoid delusions of orcs, naked swords, and one "Parfait of misery." Well, everyone involved was suffering from low blood sugar and was in need of a little snack to get through this horrible ordeal.

About to take their first bites, they all got pushed down some stairs. Low-fi hardcore / punk from ATL that was "Recorded in the goblin waste of the years of snack darkness." Originally put out as a cassette in 2010, it's immature, intelligent, and too ridiculous not to enjoy. Think about it, for just a few dollars you can put a delicious treat into the needy hands of some punk kid. Go on, get these kids a Chipwich and some mozzarella sticks, stat. —Jackie Rusted (No Breaks, nobreaksrecords.com)

SADE, THE: "II": CD

As soon as I pushed play on this CD and the beefy, Italian horror rock blasted out of my stereo, I became a fan of The Sade. It's tough being a fan of horror in music. The majority of it is unoriginal Misfits rip-offs by people who haven't bothered to scratch the surface of the horror genre. The next CD in my review pile has an Army of Darkness tribute cover and I'm just dreading it. Yes, I love *Army of Darkness* and the *Evil Dead* movies, but you can't imagine the number of dreadful songs I've listened to about those flicks. There's so much more to the horror genre than Ash and Misfits style "whoa-ohh's", and The Sade proves it. The second song on this CD is a howling tribute to a short story called "The Werewolf" by Angela Carter. It's rare for a band to tip me off to a horror story I don't know, so I'm impressed. But it takes more than a solid understanding of the genre to make a good record. The shit still has to rock. The Sade does,



without getting sucked into any of the clichés. This is full-on rock, with deep, driving vocals and machete-swinging guitar solos. Oh, but check this out: By the third song, they've introduced an eerie string section that adds a perfectly gruesome touch without detracting from the direction of the track. Halfway into the record, they also throw in some insane tenor and soprano sax solos. It's fucking wild. But they don't abandon all the traditional tools either. In the second-to-last song, they whip out some of the most effective "whoa-ohhh's" I've heard in a while, and then they close out the record with an acoustic country stomper that puts the best of the psychobillies to shame. I'm going to listen to this CD a lot. —MP Johnson (Self-released, thesade.com)

SANDSPUR CITY: Self-titled: 7"

Featuring members of Tim Version, Vaginasore Jr., Discount, and Clairmell, this is unapologetically Tampa punk. If you like Tim Version and Vaginasore Jr., this is already a win for you. It's more spacious and singier than Tim Version, but more dialed in than VSJ. A perfect middle ground between two badass bands. If you're not a fan of this style, I can't see this EP winning you over. Definitely curious to see if these guys have a full-length in them. —Daryl (A.D.D.)

SCALPED: Demo: 2014: Cassette

Scalped rises from gritty ashes, still smoldering. Seems like bands churn out of San Francisco's hardcore scene

like pink slime out of the proverbial meat grinder. Some serious hardcore, drenched in heavy distorted guitar riffs, swift and at times searing change-ups, all layered atop with raw and savage throat-shredding vocals. Heads up to fans of Stoic Violence, Hoax, and Replica: fresh meat. —Camille Reynolds (Thoughtabuse415@gmail.com)

SCAVENGERS, THE: Self-titled: LP

This is a raw '77 punk relic from New Zealand. The Scavengers are high energy all the way, with heavy Buzzcocks snot. This release combines The Scavengers' offerings for the seminal New Zealand compilation *AK-79*, along with other studio tracks and a few songs recorded after a name change to The Marching Girls. They stayed reliable while they were together; all the songs are good. As more and more '70s-era punk is unearthed in the digital age, you're likely to come across some duds. But this release is solid. As the band was short-lived, they put all their catchy choruses up front. It's pretty essential. And, unfortunately, expensive. It's a New Zealand release. If you haven't heard the *AK-79* comp, it's acquirable through illicit means. For our history lesson, bassist/vocalist Brendan Perry went on to form seminal Goth outfit Dead Can Dance. —Billups Allen (Real Groovy)

SECULAR PLAGUE: Vivisection: 7"

This is a punk band from France that sounds like Rudimentary Peni. Now, if you're like me (meaning you have good

taste), you just read that last sentence and have already decided to buy this record because, you know, French punk bands are generally great and... well, Rudimentary fucking' Peni. However, they somehow totally fuck this up for everyone. Every song on this record is about animal cruelty (I think). I don't think there's necessarily anything wrong with that, but it just feels like this has been done to death and they don't really offer anything new to the idea or the aesthetic. Honestly, my issue with this record is that it just sounds totally phoned in. The vocals are totally lacking any urgency and, musically, it's just a few mid-tempo anarcho stompers that all sound exactly the same. —Ian Wise (Fleshmen.fleshmen.com)

SEX SCHEME: Thruster: Cassette

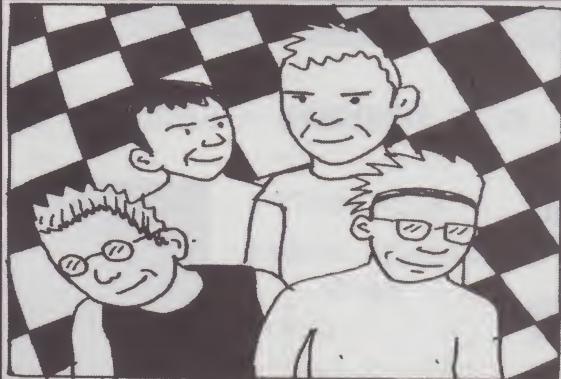
Sounds like a kooky one-man band like Voot Warnings or Jaguar, backed by the *White Light/White Heat*-era Velvet Underground rhythm section, if all parties concerned got a bunch of fingers blown off lighting firecrackers behind the barn, and answering the musical question of what Darby Crash would have sounded like during that live set at the Whiskey if his slurring got so bad he actually wound up sounding like Kickboy Face as a result. Either way, these budding geniuses have surely done for Reverend Gary Davis's "Cocaine," what the Germs did for the Archies' "Sugar Sugar," and that's saying something. FEEL THE VAST PANOPLY OF RICHES BROUGHT TO BEAR BY THE

AMAZING CASSETTE FORMAT!!!
BEST SONG: "Gratification." BEST SONG TITLE: "Amputee," which i don't believe is the Rotters song of the same name, but it's kinda hard to tell, really. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Handwriting on this copy's j-card reads "Stale Heat." —Rev. Nørb (sexscheme.tumblr.com)

SHATTERED FAITH: Modern Convenience: 7"

The title track is a potent grinder, similar in execution to D.I.'s "Richard Hung Himself," or Adolescents' "Democracy," with lyrics name checking various conspiracy theory bogeymen and a shadow government that offers security in exchange for the liberty of the American population. The flip, "USA," is a studio recording of a flag-waving rah-rah tune that's been kicking around their set for quite a while. Much as I've loved this band—and the tunes here easily stand toe-to-toe with their "classic" work of three decades past—the country's hard-right lurch over especially the past fourteen years renders songs that once felt like a well-placed jab in the eye to punk's lefty sensibilities into jingoistic anthems that just don't sit well outside the setting of some creepy Tea Party powwow. Ah, well, while I might not agree with 'em lyrically here, the tunes are undeniably strong. Also includes a download card with a 1982 live set from the T-Bird Rollerdom in Pico Rivera. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hostage.hostagerecords.com)

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SILVERHOUNDS, THE: *Hellacious*: CD

This is very competent psychobilly. I have trouble with this genre, in part because of the inherent goofiness and in part because of a commitment to conformity. Same rhythm, same song subjects, same fucking hair. I can't knock a band for doing their thing and doing it well, sprinkling in some rad guitar solos here and there, but why not open that shit up? I feel like these guys get there on the last track, "Live Fast," which gets a bit more thrashy, lets loose a bit more, messes its hair up, and just charges forward. I think this is the kind of band that will just keep pushing it with each release. If you're a rockabilly fan, you probably should keep your eye on The Silverhounds. —MP Johnson (Zodiac Killer, zodiackillerrecords.com)

SLAG: *Self-titled*: 7"

Members of Libyans, Broken Prayers, Mac Blackout Band, and the hype fest that is Narcoleptics. This is a lot more straight-forward hardcore than their other projects and it pulls out a lot of classic Chicago influences. I definitely hear Rights Of The Accused and Articles Of Faith in this thing and all the songs have catchy riffs played at less-than-breakneck speed, but that's cool because they are actual songs instead of just genre pieces. An under-the-radar ripper from what is unfortunately a one-off band. —Ian Wise (Hesitation Wound, hesitationwoundrecords@gmail.com)

SLURS: *Self-titled*: Cassette

Melodic hardcore out of Winnipeg delivers dry throat, scratchy vocals on four tracks that precede their demo released earlier this year. Dense, melodic chords like Naked Raygun and G.B.H. bolster "Care Less," while "Stay In" and "Pick Up" slow it down to a garage tempo, the latter relying on a chirping chord to carry it home. "N.I.L." closes it out with a screechy, no wave guitar hook bringing in elements of Deerhunter. While this is a good precursor to their five-track demo, the sound quality is muddy and the fact that only one track has managed to stick it out leaves me to suggest the demo over this. Still worth an ear if you can track it down. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Self-released)

SONIC AVENUES: *Mistakes*: LP/CD

If you're wondering if this record lives up to *Television Youth*: the answer is *yes!* Sitting in front of a computer trying to explain this band is just wrong. I should be doing a cannon ball off a roof with this blaring out of a boom box. But this isn't just party punk. In fact, quite opposite. This Québécois band delivers some serious bummer jams via flawless, rabid power pop hooks. Song titles like "Better Days To Come," "Wasted Summer," and "Tired, Bored & Alone," suggest a much more human element is at play than the insta-BBQ tempos would conjure at first listen. Making mistakes may just be part of living one's life. But all hail the Sonic Avenues for pumping out

another righteous, impeccable, turbo pop record. —Daryl (Dirtmap)

SONIC NEGROES: *Pucker Up*: CD

Wow, been a spell since I've heard anything from the band and the label, but based on this, it sounds like both are still on the same trajectory since last we hung out together to do some damage to my eardrums. Sonic Negros churn out rock-solid boogie-punk ditties here, with Marshalls loud and the swaggering in overdrive. Been kind of burned out by the sheer volume of bands that have taken up this style over the past decade or two, but these cats do it with enough oomph to keep 'em from getting lost in the shuffle. —Jimmy Alvarado (Zodiac Killer)

SPEEDOZER: *Super Charger*: CD

There's not an official subgenre name that I know of for seedy, raw, bar punk, but that's what Speedozer goes for on this solid debut. The catch here is that the band is from Belgium, despite sounding like they're from Detroit. Reminiscent of Nashville Pussy, or maybe a tougher version of Trash Brats, Speedozer delivers on the speed front, with most of the songs far exceeding the mid-tempo melodrama expected from this type of material. With lyrics about drugs, murder, and sex, there's plenty of tongue-in-cheek tomfoolery at hand amidst the toughness. Sporadic use of mini lead guitar lines adds complexity while simultaneously, and thankfully, distancing Speedozer from metal. You'll need a supercharger for your media

device after playing *Super Charger* as many times as you're going to want to. —Art Ettinger (Zodiac Killer)

SPIKE PENETRATOR: *Yeah! Yeah!..Baby!*: LP

This is a collection of recordings Spike Penetrator made in the early seventies when he was in high school and The Penetrators was still a ways into the future. It's kind of fun to listen to. For people of a certain age who remember getting their first tape recorders and spending their free time recording songs off the radio and trying to be funny on tape. There are some funny *Mad Magazine*/Dr. Demento-influenced ideas and some neat lo-fi recordings of Spike experimenting with musical styles. Very goony and fun at times. It appeals to me as a history buff. —Billups Allen (Feral Kid, feralkidrecords.com)

STAGGER & FALL: *Hero to the People*: 7"

Cool, a new release on Chapter Eleven Records. Seems like it has been a few years since I have seen something from them. Chapter Eleven has traditionally been a really strong label that was / is run by members of the Randumb and known for releasing top shelf street punk type stuff. I am glad to say that Stagger & Fall continue that tradition, bringing some really tuneful working class punk that would have been right at home on TKO Records in the late '90s. This band basically splits the difference between the Beltones and Reducers SF,

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so if you love that melodic, gruff street punk, you will wanna be all over this single. —Mike Frame (Chapter Eleven, chapterelevenrecords.com)

STARZY SIDA: *Self-titled*: CD

Apparently, this is a one-time side project featuring Patyczak on vocals and the band Starzy Singers from Warsaw. Late '70s punk seems to be the main influence on these tunes. Everything is played with controlled chaos and it seems to work well. I wish I could tell you more about how this connects with me emotionally, but all the liner notes seem to be in their native tongue. I'd really appreciate an English lyric section on their bandcamp page so I could follow along. —Sean Koepenick (Nikt Nic Nie Wie, info@nnnw.pl)

STELLAR CORPSES: *Vampire Kiss*: 7"

I'm way into the upright bass playing on this record. I don't know if there's any virtuosity going on, because I don't know shit about upright bass. I just know that I hear a lot of psychobilly records with very neutered upright bass, as if they arbitrarily grabbed a jazz band kid, gave him a pompadour, and made him a member of the band without first indoctrinating him in the style. The upright bass playing on this record is a perfect rumbling undercurrent that's like a knife to the neck, poised to cause serious harm. The rest of the music isn't too shabby either. It's nice and malicious. If there's a weak link, it's the vocals, which seem too clean and restrained. Needs more

howling. Also, it's probably not fair to call this psychobilly. Some of the tropes are there, but there's not much of the 'billy. The band draws just as much from melodic punk and even thrash, particularly on the B-side. It all comes together nicely. —MP Johnson (Chapter 11, chapterelevenrecords.com)

STILETTO BOYS: *Liberator*: CD

This is the Stiletto Boys third full-length release, but first release in well over a decade. Why the wait? Originally recorded in 2008, the band scrapped the entire album in pursuit of perfection. Finally released in 2013, *Liberator* is a powerpop masterpiece featuring a spot-on cover of Stiv Bator's "Not That Way." But it's not just fluff; there is some real substance here. Impeccable production, warm fuzzy guitar, and the harmonies... *oh the harmonies!* This album is the first spring day after a long, shitty winter. —Jackie Rusted (Zodiac Killer, zodiackillerrecords.com)

STRANGE PARTY, THE: *Waste of Flesh / Radio(in)active* EP: Cassette

A ton of potential here, what with their tried and true Misfits / SoCal whoa-oh melodic approach. But it feels to me like this is a young band who, over the course of the two EPs on this tape, are spending more time working on their individual parts than listening to each other: there's often so much going on that the songs don't have much space to breathe. The last song here, "Angel of Summer," is the best and most spacious.

It's also the one which sounds the most unrepentantly like ol' Glenn and co. —Michael T. Fournier (Pleasant Screams, pleasant screams.storenvy.com)

STRANGLEHOLD: *Trouble*: 7"

I suppose that I am destined to write reviews of this band because of our names. I'm okay with that because I really liked their last 7". Stranglehold is back with another three-song blast of dirty street punk. Musically, Stranglehold reminds me of a mid-tempo Bodies but this time out the singer sounds like she had really upped her cigarette and whiskey intake. Seriously, she is heading into Frankie Stubbs and Lemmy territory. It makes for a tougher sounding record for sure, but I wish there was just a little less gravel in her voice. It's still a solid record though. —Ty Stranglehold (Pirates Press)

STREET EATERS: *BLOOD::MUSCLES::BONES*: LP

There's something empowering about bands self-releasing their records. Like an employee owned and operated brewery, it just puts a smile on my face. Record labels are as important as ever, it's just different. Street Eaters kill it on their second proper full-length. The drums stampede in frantic unison while the bass sounds like a meteor shower, but the meteors aren't burning up in the atmosphere. Hubs of civilization aflame. Chaos reigns. Process that and then add two of the most dynamic and powerful vocalists in punk

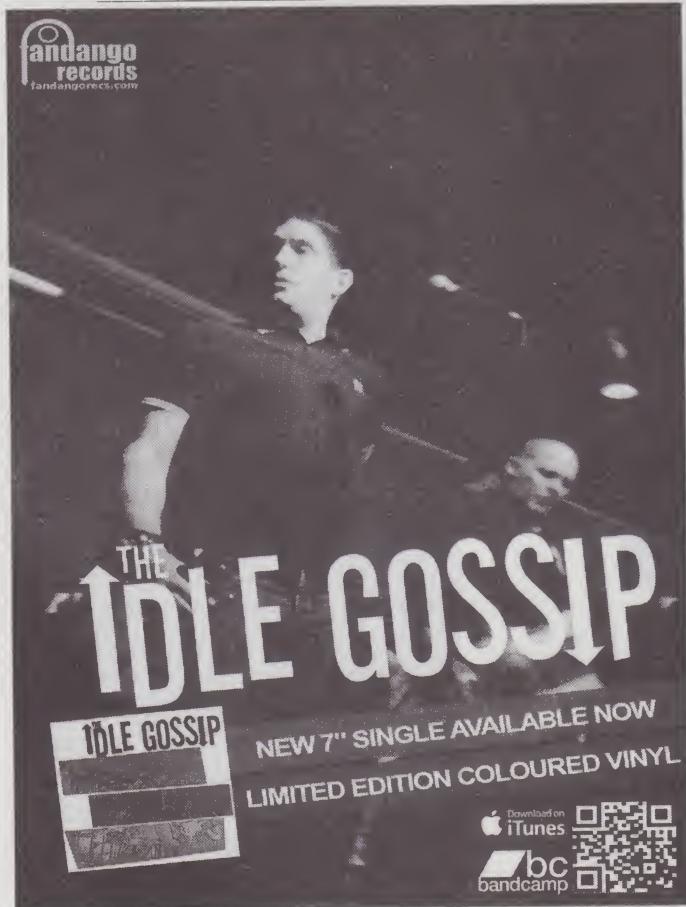
today. If something gets described as crusty or art-punk, it can be met with reservations, but Street Eaters relentlessly bring those elements (*and more!*) together in true, devastatingly beautiful harmony. —Daryl (Nervous Intent [US], nervousintent@gmail.com/ Contreras! [Europe], info@diyordie.net)

STREGESTI: *Self-titled*: CD

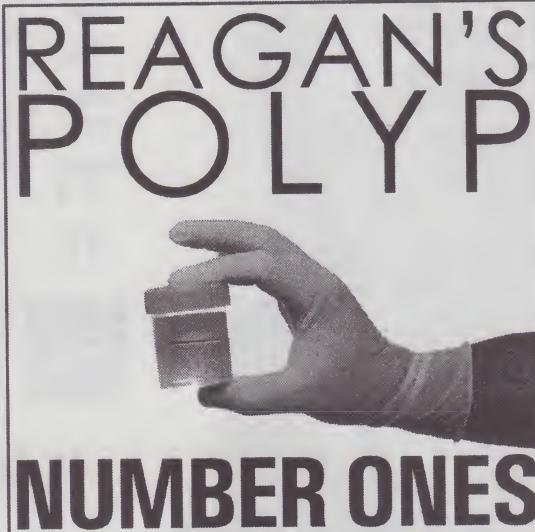
Super solid Polish crust/hardcore. Dueling female/male vocals scream and growl their way through thoughtfully written and thoughtfully translated lyrics. The packaging is pretty special, and from what little I could find out about the band, was handmade by them. Silk-screened cardboard cover and booklet printed on recycled paper, it's a real labor of love. —Jackie Rusted (Nikt Nic Nie Wie, nnnw.pl, info@nnnw.pl)

SUBURBAN MOMS: *Turning Schools into Stone*: 7"EP

Suburban Moms comes out with their latest 7", which I have to say is quite good, despite their awful band name and bleak cover. At least it caught my curiosity? A-side's "Turning Schools into Stone" is very similar in sound to Synthetic ID with a melodic post-punk guitar, propelling beat, and jumping bass line. Vocals are a-melodic, almost used as percussion, punctuated from the ebb and flow of guitar. It's good. Really good. B-side features "Tolerating Intolerance," less catchy, tinges of Adolescence, more straight-ahead '80s early punk, vocals a bit



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more screechy. Keep A-side on replay.
—Camille Reynolds (Pashtone/Plant Bullshit, planetbullshit.biz)

SUBURBAN MUTILATION: *The Opera Ain't Over Til the Fat Lady Sings*: CD

Fuggin' awesome! This is the first time I've listened to this, despite knowing about this band for the past thirty years. Why it took me this long, I have no idea. Maybe if I had heard this back then, my life would be better, and maybe I would have more friends, and a better job. Whatever the case, this is highly recommended, and maybe even essential. Originally released in 1984, and featuring Rev. Nørb of Sick Teen zine (and later Razorcake), these guys cranked out some intense hardcore punk that definitely didn't take itself seriously, but still has a sonic punch. The guitar sounds like hell, the vocals are gravelly and raspy, with the drums pounding and thundering underneath. The songs range from super fast to more mid-tempo fare. And the lyrics are pretty good as well. Teen angst with a humorous edge. "Apathy" and "I Reject U" may become your anthems. There's a ton of bonus material on here as well. Along with the original seventeen-song LP, there are thirty tracks of recordings done in basements and garages, varying in quality, but the energy comes through loud and clear. This stuff is so good, and so different than Boris The Sprinkler? Who saw that coming? —M.Avg (Beer City, beercity.com)

SUICIDE SYNDICATE: *In It for Life: 12" LP*

Suicide Syndicate sounds like a lot of bands. The first track is almost a complete AC/DC ripoff. I hear Rancid and Motörhead and The Misfits. More than anything, it seems that Suicide Syndicate wants you to know that they are tough. Even if their songs sound tired and repetitive, Suicide Syndicate play to say, "Fuck that weak shit," which just happens to be the title of track two, side two. When will someone say, "Fuck that tough-guy shit?" Clichés are clichés for a reason, I suppose. —John Mule (Switchlight, switchlight-records.com)

TANKIFIED: *Volume I: CD*

If you like your generic SoCal-style punk rock with a generous dose of arena hair metal, then run—don't walk—to get this record. Me, I'm gonna stay where I am. There is cowbell. Lots of it. Guitar solos and effect pedals, oh my! Remember that time Green Day covered The Scorpions? This is like The Scorpions covering Green Day. Well, not even The Scorpions—more like Dokken. If Wal-Mart went into the business of opening dive bars, these guys would be the house band. —Lisa Weiss (Mystery School, mysteryschoolrecords.bigcartel.com)

TEENGENERATE: *Five Covers: 7"*

Cover projects can be throwaway vinyl at times, but Teengenerate bring their blazing train wreck speed to DMZ's "Boy from Nowhere," The Real Kids'

"She's Alright," and The Pagans' "And Change." Good taste and crowd pleasers don't always translate to vinyl, but these three tracks create serious rattlehead in the comfort of your own home. The Queer's "Kicked out of Webelos" and an Elvis cover are only nominal by Teengenerate standards. These tracks are taken from nineteen-year-old demos and show the raw power of a band that everyone should kneel before. —Billups Allen (Crypt, cryptrecords.com)

TERMINUS: *Going Nowhere Fast: CD*

Reissue of a 1990 record from this English band, a band I've never heard before and a fascinating listen. Musically, it covers a lot of territory, from speedy hardcore to slow, dark, doomy punk, to melodic mid-tempo punk, all with a constant undercurrent of classic crust. Oh, and some very un-technical metal solos. There's a sprawling, epic nature to this very raw record that adds some weight to the very political lyrical content, sung with a lead vocal that's sort of The Baron-meets-Dave Vanian. Sounds like a mix of various recording sessions, and they needed to use an original vinyl copy to create this reissue, so sound quality is average, but definitely does not detract from the content whatsoever. A nice surprise of a record and something I'd seek out a vinyl copy of if it wasn't so rare. Fans of bands from Amebix to Chron Gen: get this now. —Chad Williams (Bosstuneage Retro, bosstuneage.com)

TRUBBEL: *Gör Om Gör Rätt: 7"*

The Swedes sure have a way of nailing the sounds of U.S. rock'n'roll and yet making it their own. Trubbel plays catchy, straight-up Chuck Berry via Johnny Thunders sassy punk rock that sounds a lot like fellow Swedes Knugen Faller with lower register male vocals but the same amount of sass. My gut tells me that Trubbel likely puts on one hell of a live show, too. —Dave Williams (Alleycat)

TSUNAMIS, THEE: *Delirium and Dark Waters: 7"*

Seriously awesome female lo-fi, garagey surf rock with lots of reverb. The first track opens with a dark and heavy bass rumbling in for a measure or two and is quickly joined by twangy, bright guitar and high-pitched squeals. The drums are tight, controlled, and way mellow compared to the smorgasbord of chaotic sounds from the rest of the band. Thee Headcoatees meets The Cramps with four songs about haunted houses, hanging at the swamp, spell casters, and psycho lovers that will creepy crawl right into your head. For a three piece band, they sound incredibly full and while the riffs used are pretty common in surf rock, they're not normally played at this speed and with such frantic excitement. Thee Tsunamis are '60s mod, surf, and horror punk all at once and they manage to make all their elements extremely enjoyable. —Kayla Greet (Magnetic South)

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TV FREAKS: *Leeches: 7"*

Holy. Fucking. Shit. Did I just get rammed into by a truck? Whereas TV Freaks' last record was at least somewhat polished sounding, this 7" is just pure disgusting, spit in your eyeballs filth. *Leeches* sounds like what insanity feels like: the vocals intense shouts, the guitars deranged and the drums flailing and crashing. These three tracks are guaranteed to scare your parents, even if they're the hip ones who buy fair-trade coffee and listen to the morning show on campus radio. If you thought Strange Attractor was the only Canadian outfit making maniacal punk noise, you need to turn your knob onto TV Freaks, one of the few punk bands making the genre a fucking threat again. A. —Alanna Why (Hosehead, hoseheadrecs@gmail.com, hoseheadrecords.ca)

UNDERCLASS U.K.:***Not in My Name: CD***

These guys started in the '80s but went on a massive hiatus after their guitar player got arrested on drugs charges. They're from Barking, the same place that hatched Billy Bragg. The lyrics have the same class-conscious—if much less poetic—outlook on life. The music is what you'd expect from a band with U.K. in their name—mid-tempo street punk a la U.K. Subs or Chaos U.K. (Oh wait, there's Chameleons U.K. and The Mission U.K., too. This band is nothing like that.) The vocals are rawer on some tracks, which set them apart from the rest of the street

punk pack. On other tracks, there is some kind of weird effect applied which makes them sound muddy. Not so fast but plenty furious, this is the perfect soundtrack for plotting your next act of civil disobedience. —Lisa Weiss (Punk Lives Live, punklives.punkcartel.com)

VANILLA MUFFINS:***The Triumph of Sugar Oi!: CD***

Another "best of" (this makes five, by my count) from these cats, this time with a large chunk of tunes from their *The Drug Is Football* LP joining the lineup with older fare. Seems a bit overkill, yes, but I reckon if you're looking for a quick taste of what they do, and the other four collections are unavailable, this'll do nicely. Here, you get fourteen tracks of their "sugar oi" sound—heaping piles of pop-laden punk ditties owing more to Slade than Last Resort, with full-ring guitars aplenty and huge, anthemic hooks just a-dripping off the disc. Vanilla Muffins have long been a guilty pleasure of mine, and this does nothing to diminish that in any way. —Jimmy Alvarado (Spirit Of The Streets, oi-punk.com)

VÅNNA INGET: *Ingen Botten: LP*

My punk jadedness to polished music left me unprepared for the ghostlike precision of each haunting note on *Ingen Botten*. I'm glad that I don't understand a bit of Swedish (although I was tempted to read some butchered Google translations), because I'm better able to appreciate Karolina Engdahl's

sorrowful crooning. The fast songs are post-punk infused power pop, like Red Dons, complete with hi-hat-driven dance beats and bold choruses that seductively lick your eardrums. But with a decisive swoop, Vånna Inget dives into darker melodies instilled with the goth flair of Siouxsie And The Banshees. Karolina beckons alongside the brooding organ which is never sugary. Instead, the keys drip into doom-y beats while the restrained guitars reverberate over the deliberate, ambling bass lines. It comes as no surprise that these folks were nominated for a Swedish Grammy, as this album is utterly high drama: bold, distinct, grandiose. Are the Grammys worth even a smidgen of interest? Nope. But Vånna Inget do deserve tons of kudos for this exceptionally crafted LP. Recommended. —Sean Arenas (Man In Decline, manindeclinerecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Aperiodic, Mala In Se, Joe 4, Knife The Symphony: 2 x 7"*

Whoa! This is a complete stinker. It has this weird 1990s nostalgia about it, where the record is like a sampler of some of the many sounds of that bygone decade. You have a band like Joe 4, who sound like they really like Shellac, but are so blinded in their fandom, they don't quite realize that one of the reason Shellac was a good band was because they were original. Knife The Symphony are bland "post hardcore" wanking. Mala In Se remind me of all the bands that clogged up the first few years of the Bullition mail order catalog, the kind of records that

take up a lot of space in today's record cut out bins. Aperiodic want to push at the constraints, and even if they were to be successful, who would notice? —M.Avrg (Phrathy, phrathyrecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Emotional Response Box of Tricks: 5 x 7" EP*

What can I say about this truly rad indie box set of five colored vinyl EPs, full of stickers, badges, and pins from Emotional Response? It's like Christmas. But through the eyes of a bushytailed-big-eyed youngster, and not the cynical thirty-something asshole-humbug I've become. Records can have that effect on me. Box stars Kickback\$, The Safe Distance, Hulaboy, Cheap Red, Thee Headless Kings, and Shindaggers. Indie darlings Stewart Anderson and Jen Turrell from Boyracer make their appearance on almost all five EPs. What's more prolific than an English man in the desert? Nothing. Only one hundred available; possibly sold out by the time you get wind of this. If not, get it. —Camille Reynolds (Emotional Response, jenandstew.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Influence: A Tribute to Big Boys: LP*

A long-overdue tribute record to one of the most prolific punk bands of our time. The Big Boys mean a whole lot to a whole lot of people and reading the introductions submitted from nearly every band gives you even more insight into just how powerful their music is even after all these years since their

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inactivity and the untimely passing of vocalist Randy "Biscuit" Turner. I'd like to start off by complimenting the astonishingly beautiful album artwork courtesy of Big Boys guitarist Tim Kerr. This particular copy is one of the limited versions with spray paint stenciled art and on coke bottle-colored vinyl. The album as a whole is completely listenable from start to finish without a single disappointing / mangling moment to be heard. Toys That Kill lead off the festivities and give "Nervous" a shot in the arm with their off-kilter San Pedro style stomp. Night Birds swoop down from Jersey and super-charge their version of "Wise Up." Mind Spiders update the television viewing audiences' favorites while adding some weirdo synth into their rendition of "TV." Other personal favorites include, but are not limited to, Spokenest, Drunk Injuns, Tight Lips, The Nervous, Low Culture, and Riverboat Gamblers with their superb take on perhaps the most beautifully melancholy Big Boys song "Sound on Sound." Gary Floyd (The Dicks frontman, longtime friend, and co-performer) provides some touching and heartfelt words for Biscuit and for the Big Boys, in general as a band, whose time and place happenstance simply cannot and will not be replicated. Their existence as a live act is something that very few fortunate souls can vividly recall. For the rest of us, there's stories and online video footage to keep us happy and now there's also this record to remind us that we're all in this

together and in great company as fans, admirers, and artists. Fun, fun, and more fucking fun! Biscuit would be proud. —Juan Espinosa (Stiff Hombre, stiffhombre.ca)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *To Live a Lie Records Volume II: LP*

Close to thirty tracks of some of the best current grind and powerviolence bands going right now. The track listing is a good mix of well-known bands of the genre (Weekend Nachos, Sick/Tired, etc.) and some relatively unknown bands that are good (and lucky?) enough to warrant inclusion on the disc. It's definitely a good representation of the scene and serves well as a go-to educational piece for people trying to get a crash course in the scene, but for those of us that follow the grind/PV scene there are still plenty of good reasons to pick this thing up (last recording by Vaccine and the first vinyl appearance of Alabama's Slave are worth the price alone). To Live A Lie are already at the top of extreme hardcore scene and this document is another welcome addition to their growing catalog of top-notch records. —Ian Wise (To Live A Lie)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Without Kibou There Is Nothing Vol. 2: 7"*

Kibou Records has been pumping vinyl and tapes out of England since 2011. Along the way, they've been using the Without Kibou There Is Nothing series as a twelve-minute showcase for groups from across the land. In part two of the

series, the A-Side features heavier acts like grind group Social Rut's 40-second pummel, "Wreck / Logic," and hardcore band Albion's "Black Charcoal Lungs," which has an evil guitar hook pulsing out some lovely, dirty melody: a little Gallows, a little Pixies—looks bad on paper but tastes great. The satisfactorily bizarre Autopsy Boys make Side-B appreciably weirder, blending post-punk with synth effects, holding the cheese, and featuring a frontman who sounds like a sort of Zero Boys' Paul Mahern if he were singing in 2079 instead of 1979. Or, you know, Robocop punk. The steady pop beat of Second In Line close out the EP with a list song recalling dead celebrities—"Walt Disney is Dead.../lots of Lassies are dead"—human and otherwise. All side, a nice tour of an EP. Now get on your baby brother's computer and do the Google math—£4 is only \$6.72, you can afford that. Optional white vinyl and included digital download. —Jim Joyce (Kibou, kibourecords.bigcartel.com)

VERBAL ABUSE: *Just an American Band: LP*

Don't have this yet? You gotta get it. I guarantee this will be a permanent part of your collection. One you will put on the turntable in another forty years and get the same rush you did as the first time you listened to it. This is hardcore punk from San Francisco 1983, featuring Nicki Sicki (from one of my all time favorite bands, Sick Pleasure) on vocals. This is the sound that had Okies like me dreaming of "the good life" in California.

Pure hardcore that is dirty and dangerousounding, and it makes you feel alive and invincible. Back when bands lived it and breathed it. The songs are fast and yet catchy and tuneful without being corny or wimpy. The crashing tempo of "I Don't Need It" is great, as well as the way Nicki Sicki delivers the lyric, "You're Shit" in "Verbal Abuse." Such a great album. —M.Avg (Beer City, beercity.com)

WARTHOG: *Prison: EP*

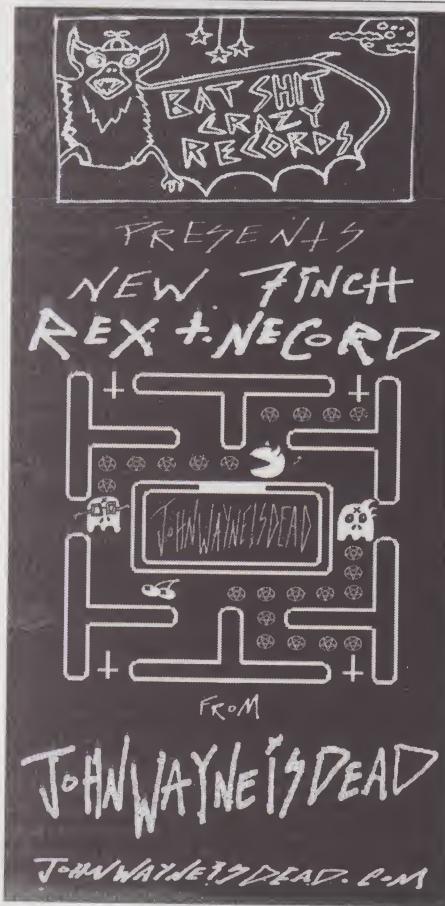
Dirty, ugly, hardcore, Poison Idea by way of Cleveland. A less hardcore Gordon Solie or Inmates maybe? Tougher than Hoax, but having that same blown-out weirdo vibe as those fellow East Coasters. Hard as fuck. Feeling it. When you think it's all been done, it comes back again, uglier, and harder. Bet this shit annihilates live. —Tim Brooks (Iron Lung, lifeironlungdeath.blogspot.com)

WE MUST DISMANTLE ALL THIS!: *Decathect: 12"LP*

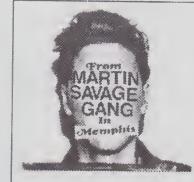
Fucking exhausting listening to this LP. Relentless. Fast, ripping anarcho-crust-thrash hardcore punk. Doubled up on both vocals and bass drum, the sound is like a rising tsunami that wipes out everything in its path. Harsh, throat-heavy growling, slick metal guitar riffs, pounding drums. Hold tight and dig your fingernails in, this might just wipe you out. —Camylle Reynolds (Dead Rodent)

WORKIN' STIFFS, THE: *My Ghetto: 7"*

A sort-of reissue of an excellent EP from these San Francisco Bay Area



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streetpunk stalwarts. Originally released by Radio Records in 2004, it appears they had some leftover records, made some new sleeves and re-released them under the revived Chapter 11 label. Ain't nothin' wrong with a little recycling. This was the Workin' Stiffs' last release, and it's a solid final batch of songs. See these fucks at the bar, 'cause they rarely play anymore. —Chad Williams (Chapter 11, chapterelevenrecords.com)

WORRIERS: *Sinead O'Rebellion: 7"*

Infectious melodies and clear, catchy lyrics merge together with a sound rhythm section, led by a powerful voice and crisp lead guitar parts. Worriers remind me a lot of The Measure [sa]. Undulating vocals that come at you full force but never loose tone or inflection. Songs are about growing up in a state of rebellion and keeping sight of your values, even if they're alternative ones. In the title track of the release, singer Lauren Denitzio proclaims: "I align myself with the likes of those who rip up photos on broadcast TV / speaking truthfully isn't quite as easy as making your family happy." Worriers seem to be driven mostly by Denitzio, who wrote all the tracks on the release and plays lead guitar, though the other three musicians are not lacking any relevance in the band. Beautiful guitar solos wail throughout the record on the wings of the steady and melodic rhythm section with great talent. "Get Bored" is one of the best break up songs I've heard in a long time. "When I'm working my way up, you're hanging

with a scum punk / it's all a turn off / it doesn't matter anyway / you've got the good times, I've got my Chinese take-away." I love that it's an open-ended song about relationships in general; friend fall outs are just as harsh as break ups. There is a gorgeous lyrical cadence that travels the length of this release which got me singing along on the first listen. They won me over with this 7" and I'm eagerly looking forward to what they do in the future. —Kayla Greet (Yo, yoyorecords.blogspot.de)

WOVENHAND:

Refractory Obdurate: CD/LP

Wovenhand is the vehicle by which Denver's David Eugene Edwards shares his spiritual message of both god's love and his judgment. It's dark American gothic music with heavy doses of punk, world, native, and Americana influences. While those sounds are there on his latest album, *Refractory Obdurate*, this is by far the heaviest and most aggressive album he's ever released. This is appropriate since he's now releasing music on the metal label Deathwish. It's also appropriate because his four-piece band now includes two members of Planes Mistaken For Stars: Chuck French and Neil Keener. But it's Ordy Garrison's drumming that drives many of the heavier songs. It isn't complex, but it's compelling, and gives the songs backbone unlike anything else heard before in Wovenhand's music. Imagine Nick Cave fronting a stomping, balls-out rocking punk band. While I would

normally cringe at lyrics about god, Edwards' words are never fake—he's sincere about his beliefs but is just telling his tale. He isn't out to win an argument or convert anyone. Edwards is the musical version of nineteenth-century abolitionist John Brown. His sound and music are dark, heavy, and laden with a message about god's glory and judgment, and he really doesn't care who likes it. Thankfully for all of us, it's excellent. I can only imagine how good this is live. —Kurt Morris (Deathwish, deathwishesinc.com)

YOUNG IDEA, THE: *Warpaint: 7" EP*

This debut release from these Bay Area punks fuckin' rips! From what I've read, the members of the band have all paid their dues in other outfits and have now come together to create this monster they call The Young Idea. The four songs included on this vinyl spinner are all punk as fuck but with a ska dynamic added for good measure. The main riff of the opening song "Citadel" has an early Down By Law sound to it complete with a Dave Smalley style vocal delivery. The title track "Warpaint" has a strong ska punk presence with a gorgeous guitar melody throughout. "Wretch Like Me" hits hard musically with a chorus that is both potent and memorable. The song "Santa Cruz" starts with an almost surf style intro but quickly picks up the pace during the verses only to break down for a brilliant sing-a-long chorus. Truly, one of the best releases I've heard this year. Looking forward to hearing more

from this band. —Brent Nimz (Chapter Eleven, chapterelevenrecords.com)

ZATOPEKS: *About Bloody Time: CD*

Finally... Zatopeks are back with more of their high energy pop punk. Singer Will DeNiro's snarly delivery almost gives the songs a Buzzcocks feel at times but as a whole they stick with the mid-tempo, polished sound they're famous for. Some of the songs veer off their usual path like "Acetate" which has a definite '50s vibe to it or "Life Is Elsewhere" with its New Model Army type intro. They also show a hint of streetrock in songs "Wait For The Fall" and "Chequerboard". All in all, another solid effort from these U.K. punks. The catchy, solid punk tunes included here made the wait for this new album well worth it. —Brent Nimz (It's Alive, info@itsaliverecords.com, itsaliverecords.com)

ZIPGUN BOMBER:

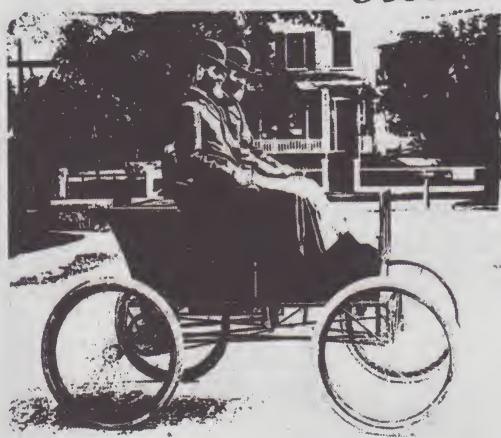
Paper Airplanes: CDEP

Nate Doyle (ex-Guts) switches from bass to guitar and starts a pop punk trio that has a spring in their step. It's catchy and hard-driving punk that will get your blood pumping when you crank this up. The five songs included go by in a flash. But there's not a stinker in the bunch, and when the last song trots out an acoustic, you may be reaching for the Kleenex. High quality and worthy of your attention. —Sean Koepenick (King Yum, ZipGunBomber@gmail.com)

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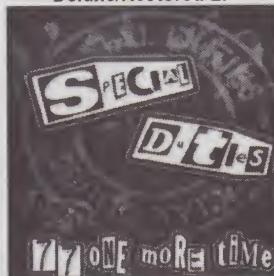
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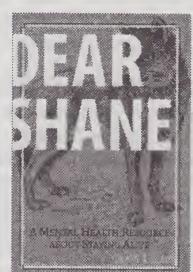
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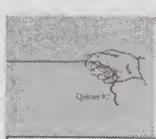
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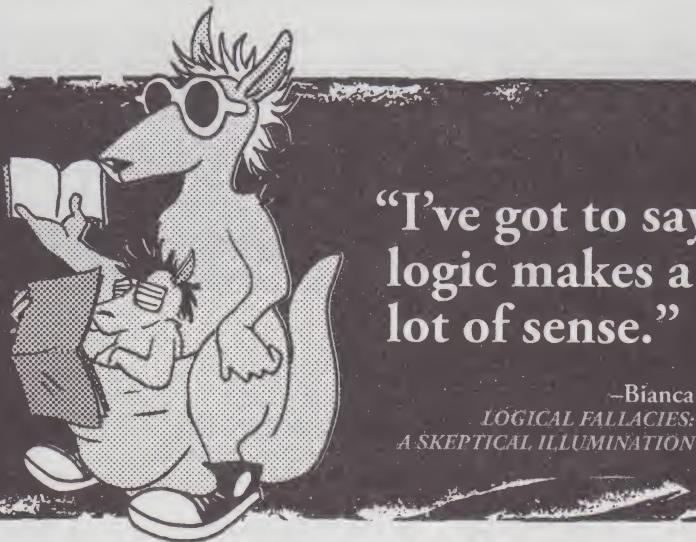
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“I've got to say,
logic makes a
lot of sense.”

—Bianca

*LOGICAL FALLACIES:
A SKEPTICAL ILLUMINATION*

ANIMALIA #1, \$2, 8½" x 5½", copied, 28 pgs.

I will not wait until the wee hours of the morning before they are due to do my reviews again. Why? Because sometimes I have to review disturbing stories like those found within the pages of this zine and I will have nightmares. All three stories are about how humans and animals do not always form a peaceable kingdom. The writing style is nothing to write home about, but the subtle way that the horror creeps into a seemingly benign story is pretty damn cool. The first story is young adult fiction gone horribly wrong. The other two have a strong social satire component. It's what I would imagine Jonathan Swift would write if he watched a lot of sci-fi/horror movies. Fortunately, there are no illustrations except for the front cover. —Lisa Weiss (Jim Gies, 2020 N California Ave. #276, Chicago, IL 60647, hip.kid.records@gmail.com)

AS YOU WERE: A PUNK COMIX ANTHOLOGY: #3,

\$10, 5½" x 7½", offset with cardstock cover, 112 pgs.

The entries featured are snapshots into the lives of each contributor. While some comics do this more literally than others, each is truly personal. I found “A Happy Death” by Cathy G. Johnson to be extremely relatable, because who hasn't met *that* guy who makes you feel inadequate about your world views or choices in music? I was touched by the minimalism in “The You & Me Game,” though the illustrations consist solely of a dog and cat laying together, the heartbreak of an ending relationship is conveyed so effectively in the last six panels; I felt it like a weight in my chest. My favorite of the bunch is definitely “Upgrade” by Ben Sears. Written entirely in binary, it's worth the effort of typing each one and zero into a binary translator to fully understand this lovable comic. This collection has something for everyone; a great addition on any bookshelf. —Ashley Ravelo (Silver Sprocket, 1057 Valencia St., SF, CA 94110, silversprocket.net)

CABILDO QUARTERLY #6, \$1, 11" x 17", copied, 2 pgs.

The sixth issue of this literary rag is still two pages of eleven by seventeen inches. There are a number of poems and a story by Jeff Schroeck of the band Black Wine. I enjoyed the story because short fiction usually does me well and it was about shitty stuff that happens at work and we've all had to deal with that. The poetry challenged me and seemed more accessible than previous issues. I'd love to see some more fiction and non-fiction and a little less poetry. Nevertheless, this is coming along well. —Kurt Morris (CQHQ, PO Box 784, Belchertown, MA 01007, cabildoquarterly.tumblr.com)

CURING CANCER #1, \$?, 5½" x 8½", copied, 44 pgs.

Despite the Germs reference on the cover, most of this book's humor comes from science references, puns, and nerd trivia. Kind of like XKCD. Half of the pages were blank, and the commentary for the comics was longer than the comics themselves. GRADE: C-. (I'm pretty happy with this review. I think I captured exactly what was wrong with the comic I received in question. It's not that the jokes from the comic were unfunny, per se, but they weren't exactly unpredictable. This review also accurately captures how annoying it is to see the content of the zine outweighed by meaningless commentary and explanations of the jokes. A three-panel joke about Hellboy does not need two hundred words to explain the intricacies of the art. Plus, how do you not just print two-sided? It seems like such a waste of paper to leave so many completely blank. I hesitate to make fun of the creators' intelligence, because clearly it takes some brain work to be able to create these comics. Still, you'd think learning how to properly print a zine wouldn't be rocket science.) —Bryan Static (curingcancercomics.com)

EARTH FIRST! BRIGID 2014, \$6.50, 8½" x 11", glossy cover, 57 pgs.

Earth First brings you news on all things environmental going on around the world, and also acts as a forum that anyone can write into and have a chance to get published. Magazines like this aren't around as much anymore, which is why it's so great to see Earth First continue to publish in glossy cover, despite most people turning to the internet for news now. The main article in this issue is the protest and saboteurs of the UK Badger Cull, where badgers are pretty much open season for anyone. Secondary articles include effects of the police state on environmentalism and the fight against hydrofracking in Romania. There are countless shorter articles as well. This zine is packed with information. It gives updates on the animal liberation front and earth liberation front, too. The format is beautiful and well done. It's great to see a zine like this still circulating, and after reading it, I got a subscription. Anyone who considers themselves an environmentalist should absolutely check this one out. —James Meier (Earth First! Journal, PO Box 964, Lake Worth, FL 33460)

EXCUSE ME WHILE I THINK FREELY #5, \$?, 5½" x 8½", copied, 17 pgs.

EMWITF is a mixed bag, full of prose, poetry, non-fiction, and the occasional crudely drawn comic. Personally I'm not usually into poetry or short fiction, but because of the diversity of the subject matter, I did find something I liked in here: the story at the very end, a sort of memorial for one of the author's professors who'd recently passed away. I would have liked a little bit more information in the zine on where it was printed, and where it comes from—who makes it (e.g. bios about the contributors, or even a mailing address). It was great to see a zine with so many contributors, and that made me curious about who and where they are. —Bianca (creeps@excusemewhileithinkfreely.com)

GENEVA13 #20, free in Geneva, \$2 to get mailed, 8½" x 5½", copied, 32 pgs.

I wish every town and city had a zine like this. This zine puts the biggest emphasis on a local city town—in this instance, Geneva, New York—I've ever seen. It's great. This particular issue has interviews with the store owners and artists of Linden Street. This focuses on the people just as much as their businesses. Nothing is out of context, which, while making the interviews pretty long, lets you read exactly everything that was said. There are interviews with the people of the post office, an upholstery shop, a muralist, insurance company, bank, wine bar, and lounge. These things may not sound all too exciting, but they all delve deep into their stories and what drives their businesses. I love this zine because it reminds you how complex and unique every single individual is. It's a celebration of the community they live in. I think more cities should take note. —James Meier (Geneva13 Press, PO Box 13, Geneva, NY 14456)

GUIDE TO DATING GANGSTERS: VOL. 2, \$4, 5½" x 8½", copied, 18 pgs.

Guide to Dating Gangsters begins by redefining the often-stigmatized term “gangster.” By broadening the scope of what constitutes a “gang,” the writer provides a humorous in-depth look at groups not commonly attributed with the moniker: Greasers, Bosses, Cat People, Stoners, Inmates, and Experimental Musicians. Complete with fashion tips, date ideas, and music with which to woo your respective gangster, this zine is an invaluable tool for navigating the vast and dangerous ocean that is the dating world. The author pools the information from personal experience—making it all the more relatable. After finishing, it made me wonder what I missed out on in volume one. Recommended. —Ashley Ravelo (Vice Versa, viceversapress.com)

HUG IT OUT #1, \$2 ppd. U.S., \$3 ppd. Canada & Mexico, \$4 ppd. world, copied, 5½" x 8½", 24 pgs.

I was huge into wrestling in the '80s and early '90s ((even had a letter printed in *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, with the Rock'n'Roll Express on the cover!)), but lost interest right around the time they admitted it was work ((and/or right around the time my band started playing out every weekend and I could no longer sit around getting stoned and watching WCW wrestling for two hours each Saturday evening)). I'll still pop over to a friend's house for a pay-per-view, or watch a few lucha libre DVDs when I get the itch, but, as far as following wrestling on a weekly basis goes, I think I've pretty much hung up my tights for good. Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to read page upon page of the author's angst about how the storylines are progressing: *Will they turn out well for the wrestlers he likes? Will they be good for the promotion? Will they be good for business? What will the fans think?* I used to be at work, mopping stairwells or scrubbing toilets or whatever, and look at the clock and realize I had been completely lost in thought about fricking WRESTLING for like two hours straight—like serious, contemplative, *The Thinker*-style

LOGICAL FALLACIES: A SKEPTICAL ILLUMINATION, \$1, 5½" x 8½", copied, 26 pgs.

That name is not a lie: this zine is a cram sesh on logical fallacies. What's a logical fallacy? It's defined here as a false or incorrect logical principle, and the zine goes into great detail explaining a few different ways that an incorrect logical principle can look. I've got to say, logic makes a lot of sense. This is basically a zine that can probably help the reader strengthen their critical thinking skills, which is always good. The material is also presented in an aesthetically pleasing way, with fancy Victorian clip art of disembodied hands and machine parts and salt shakers. This zine makes logic digestible and fun to look at. —Bianca (The Cultural Ether, 2440 E. Tudor Rd. #364, Anchorage, AK 99507)

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL #371, \$4.99, 8½" x 11", newsprint, 144 pgs.

The facts: Newsprint. Stalwart of scene. Columns, reviews, interviews, photos, art, ads. The April issue, which usually means a bevy of long-running April Fool's jokes, but while I didn't read every word front to back I could find hardly one. The cover, obviously: "The ALL COLUMNS ISSUE!" And most likely

"Asian Tyrant or Take-Out," "Canadian or Scientologist."

—Lisa Weiss | *ORGAN GRINDER* #3

meditation about how some scenario concocted by some dweeb in a run-down office was gonna play out. Wrestling takes on this insanely large dimension of sincere importance in the minds of the true fans, and it's cool to be led, Aaron Cometbus-style, thru the psyches of some current devotees of the art form, now that I'm in retirement and all. The only part of the zine that had my inner slob chanting "BO-ring!!! BO-ring!!!" was the five pages spent asking a friend if various maneuvers and wrestlers were "Tight or Not Tight," as the tiny photographs accompanying the piece did little by way of conveying the Tightness or Not Tightness discussed. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I have eaten at cover boy Abdullah the Butcher's restaurant ((Abdullah the Butcher Ribs and Chinese Food")) in Atlanta. No turnbuckles were on the menu. —Rev. Nørø (Hug It Out, PO Box 73691, Washington DC 20056)

LET DOWN #2, \$?, 8 ½" x 5 ½", copied, 34 pgs.

The second issue of this cut-and-paste zine has interviews with Eccentric Pop Records (Groovie Ghoulies, Jetty Boys, The Putz), The Young Rochelles, and Chris Clavin of Plan-It-X Records. Even though they were email interviews, they weren't bad. I remember when I was in high school and first started doing zines, I did a lot of interviews over email, but looking back, phone and in-person interviews are way better. They allow for much more in-depth, interesting conversations. I would've especially liked to have read a more thorough talk with Chris Clavin because his answers caused me to want to ask many more questions on where the label is now and where it's going, as well as his failed experiment to construct a punk rock community in Quincy, Illinois. In the introduction to this issue of the zine, the author mentions that his dad's favorite band ever is The Dopamines. Wow. How cool is this guy's dad? While I can appreciate the interviews that were performed, I'd love to read an interview with the author's dad. That would be way more interesting. —Kurt Morris (Blake Karlson, 1670 W. Division, Chicago, IL 60622, blakekarlson27@gmail.com)

LIFE IS POSERS #1-2, \$5 each, 5½" x 8½", 58 pgs.

Pretty good for a shitty comic. The art is kind of bland and repetitive, but the writing is solid enough to carry it through. We follow the lives of a bunch of punks as they throw a party at a friend's house. There are plenty of characters to sympathize with, depending on your relationship with the punk scene. If you're that nerd that's almost like a punk (kind of like me), then you'd probably relate to Howie the House Punk, whose house gets utterly destroyed. If you remember those times in your teenage years where you just wanted to be accepted by the older punks, Twister and Nutsack represent that part of the coming-of-age punk saga. If you're a drug-using asshole who likes to dress like street trash, then the rest of the cast might be relatable. There are a few problematic parts of the strip—such as every female character being a Sara(h) of some type, or the art literally being a cut and paste job on some panels. As actual comics, *Life Is Posers* clearly doesn't take the format too seriously. Every page is four panels of equal size with camera shots sticking to the same three or four angles throughout every strip. All in all, a good read. Grade: B. —Bryan Static (lifeisposers.com)

Felix Von Havoc's one about releasing an acoustic CD. But that's about it. Interviews with New York's Alright Fest people, O! Kult, Stab, Bill Bondsmen, Woolf, Rational Animals, Crapoulet Records, Varix. Like many volunteer-run efforts, the visual and written aesthetics wildly vary, but that's always been the case with *MRR*. Personally, I especially appreciate how much effort (via interviews, columnists, scene reports, etc.) obviously goes into making *MRR* a truly international, expansive endeavor. —Keith Rosson (MRR, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146-0760)

ORGAN GRINDER #3, \$5, 8½" x 11", full-color, 24 pgs.

This is cool! This full-color zine is full of puzzles to keep the old gray matter from turning to mush. Not your mom's Sudoku or your dad's crossword. Nooooo. There are lots of cool brain-teasers such as "Medicine or Metal Band," "Manson or Hanson," "Asian Tyrant or Take-Out," and "Canadian or Scientologist." But it's not all fun and games. There are zine reviews and a linguistic analysis of the word "oogle." It's not every day that you see the International Phonetic Alphabet and free morphemes mentioned in a zine article. Unfortunately, a note on the inside front page says this is probably the last issue, so get it while you can. —Lisa Weiss (organgrindermagazine.com)

PAGES FROM THE CULTURAL ETHER: LOVE & BEAUTY #1,

\$1, 5½" x 8½", copied, 30 pgs.

This is a collage-based zine that the author hopes readers will rework into their own art. Since these collages also include word bubbles, they end up coming off like a much cooler version of the Sunday funnies, with each page being a self-contained story. The collages draw heavily on what looks like Victorian clip, which seems to be a theme (a good one!) with zines from The Cultural Ether. I imagine reading this zine as a good palate cleanser between heavy reads or something to kick start your creativity if you're in a rut. —Bianca (The Cultural Ether, 2440 E. Tudor Rd. #364, Anchorage, AK 99507)

SNAKE PIT SPLIT WITH MY STUPID LIFE,

\$5, 5 ½" x 8 ½", copied, 48 pgs.

I was drawn to this split because I've been a longtime fan of Mitch Clem. This was Clem's first crack at producing a daily strip and it does not disappoint. Cleverer than he gives himself credit for—even when overwhelmed by responsibilities or weak and bedridden—Clem delivers satisfying and often self-deprecating punch lines in every strip. Flip the zine over and you're greeted by Ben Snake Pit's contributions. I find myself enamored with the idea of consistently chronicling my day to day; I've never had the discipline to fill a diary. Ben Snakepit's thirteen-year dedication completely blows me away. No gimmicks, no added fluff, the strips are simply his everyday life. He is able to convey the human experience through simple drawings of mischievous winks, clenched fists, and meticulously drawn piles of poop. —Ashley Ravelo (Silver Sprocket, 1057 Valencia St., SF, CA 94110, silversprocket.net)

SPARE CHANGE #26, \$2 ppd. (trades accepted) 5½" x 8½", copied, 40 pgs.

Spare Change's format is unlike anything this reviewer's ever encountered, and that's a good thing. About half of the zine is repurposed promotional mail-



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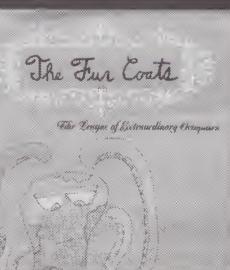


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in offers and business reply pre-paids; the other half is haikus, and they're intermingled throughout. An example of a pre-paid: when the author wrote "Single people hate your junk mail" on a reply postcard for a personalized ring designed for "soul mates." Not like I'm an expert, but the haikus were pretty good too, by which I mean they were funny. "Shit scraped off shoes/ Never comes completely clean/ Have to walk it off." A quick read, but a good one; this zine was definitely entertaining. —Bianca (Spare Change, PO Box 6023, Chattanooga, TN 37401)

SPLATTERPUNK, £3.50, 5 3/4" x 8 1/4", copied, 40 pgs.

First, I feel obligated to define Splatterpunk. For those who don't know, Splatterpunk was a subgenre of horror fiction that boomed in the '80s with writers like John Skipp, Craig Spector, and Richard Laymon. It was gritty, nasty, gory and a lot of fun. Some argue that it disappeared near the end of that decade, but that's bullshit. It's still out there, although it's often just called extreme horror (much more boring as far as labels go). This sick zine from the U.K. is dedicated to showcasing the current crop of splat-meisters, while paying homage to the masters. This issue kicks off with an all-too-brief essay by Jeff Burk, the editor of Deadite Press (arguably the epicenter of fucked-up fiction right now) on why he loves this sick shit. Next up is a fantastic story of texting-and-driving carnage served up by Shane McKenzie, one of the current kings of the genre. There are some interviews and reviews, but the short stories are really the highlight. It's twisted stuff, and it's designed to be shocking and upsetting. But it's well written and worth checking out if you're curious about what's going on in underground horror fiction. —MP Johnson (splatterpunkzine.wordpress.com)

SUSPECT PRESS #2, \$1 U.S./\$3 world, 8 1/2" x 11", newsprint, 144 pgs.

Thin little newsprint thang that serves as a fine, fine junction between the literary and punk worlds. I have no idea if all of these writers are from Denver or not, but the editors (who are no slouches themselves in the writing department) are lucky to have found them. Quality assortment of fiction shorts and creative nonfiction here, as well as a few poems, comics and reviews. Really well done; my favorite parts being Nicole Hagg's piece about the death of her mother and poor old Josiah Hesse's testicle problems. Those two authors alone made this an excellent issue. I really hope *Suspect Press* keeps going (though possibly consider changing the font of the body text, yeah?) —Keith Rosson (Suspect Press c/o Brian Polk, PO Box 100263, Denver, CO 80250)

WASTED OPPORTUNITIES #6, \$?, 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", copied, 36 pgs.

Wasted Opportunities is a really well done DIY zine made by one person from Australia. It starts out with the author's top picks of 2012 and goes into an interview with pop punk band The Capitalist Kids. The interview is very in-depth. It asks tons of questions and spans almost half of the entire publication. The interviewee gives really solid and well-explained answers. After the interview, there is a few page rant on the new *Star Wars* movie I'm sure all you nerds have heard about, which basically says what we already know but don't want to admit: there will never be another *Star Wars* that will be as good as the original or quench our blood lust for how episodes one through three turned out. There are a few reviews at the end, which are pretty detailed and provide album artwork as well. All and all, a great DIY zine that fans of pop punk in particular should check out. —James Meier (Justin, PO Box 145, Royal Brisbane, Herston, QLD, Australia 4029)

WELCOME TO THE CULTURAL AETHER #5,

\$3 for a three-issue bundle, \$5 elsewhere, 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", copied, 36 pgs.

If I were into steampunk, I imagine that this is something I would have sitting on a table in the parlor. The pages are all collages of Victorian images mixed with op-art, mixed with text that the author admits is not his own—little gems such as "It's turtles all the way down." Still, the really well executed collages are nice to look at even if the reading matter is less than inspiring. —Lisa Weiss (The Cultural Aether, 2440 E. Tudor Rd. #364, Anchorage, AK 99507)

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?, \$?, 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", copied, 36 pgs.

Have you ever moved to a new place where you knew no one, felt depressed, and were a complete outcast? Welcome to the world of being human! *Where Are You Going* covers one woman's migration and adjustment into Memphis, Tennessee. Anyone who has ever moved to a new place can relate to this. A few times, I felt like I was reading something that I would have written when I last moved. Every couple of pages she offers somewhat of a "study guide"—what things you have learned about your new city and what kind of places/people you want to be finding. It covers certain things that helped the author with stress, loneliness, and breaking into a new music scene. The story in itself is well-written and worth reading, with the added bonus of interactive study guides! New movers and old movers alike, give it a read. You'll be surprised at how much you can relate. —James Meier (Red Velvet catherinetzine@gmail.com)



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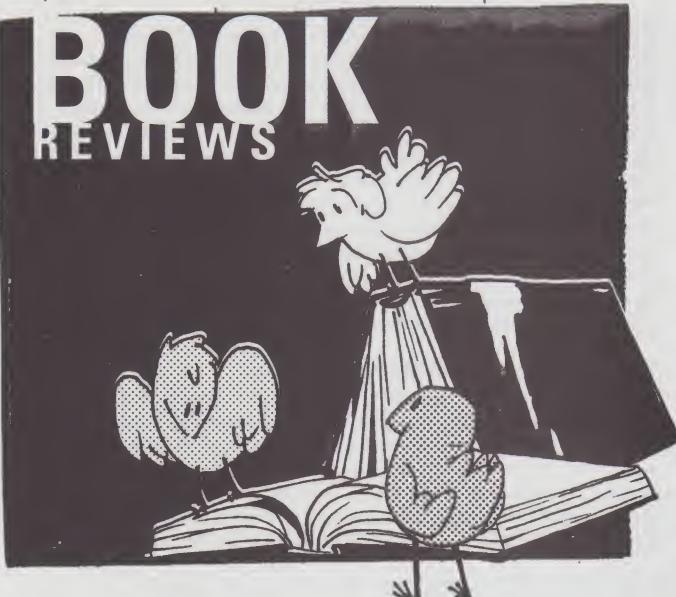
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BOOK REVIEWS



As You Were #3: A Punk Comix Anthology

Compiled by Mitch Clem, 112 pgs.

Third issue of this punk comic anthology, this time based around the theme of "Big, Big Changes." Contents vary from one- or two-page strips to multi-page plotlines. Household names—at least around *this* household—include Steve Larder, Liz Prince, Adrian Chi, Ben Snakepit, Marcos Siref, Brian Connolly, as well as editor/compiler Mitch Clem, and a cover by Lauren Denitzio. Like any compilation or anthology, content and voice varies greatly, but generally it's all pretty impressive in scope and application. Many comics in *As You Were #3* are obviously rooted in punk subculture, but not all of them—and still others manage to work in plenty of punk references but also transcend it as well—most notably Lauren Monger's eerie and heartbreakening "Clementine Gets a Real Job?" As a rule, the art and storytelling are solid, with a nice cross section of disparate styles. It's a quality print job: nicely laid out, with full-page bleeds. I wasn't enamored with everything here, but again, that's par for the course with anthologies, right? Regardless, if you're into comics, *As You Were #3* will certainly be worth a read. —Keith Rosson (Silver Sprocket, 1057 Valencia St., SF, CA 94110, silversprocket.net)

Dreadnaught: King of Afropunk

By D.H. Peligro, 280 pgs.

Buried within this memoir is the most stunning account of addiction I've ever read. One relapse after another. Along with their concomitant horrors—I'd been unfamiliar with "shooter's abscess."

And I now understand what's at the root of serial relapsing: ego. Ego, ego, ego.

Peligro's ego is still healthy enough to have subtitled his book "King of Afropunk," like he sees the book as belonging to the self-celebratory tradition of David Lee Roth's memoir *Crazy from the Heat*.

Peligro isn't as ego-blinded as Roth is, though he doesn't seem to realize that we want to read about his experiences with Dead Kennedys and Red Hot Chili Peppers and their respective eras and scenes, more than we want to read about *him*.

In my favorite passage in the book, Peligro's coked-up girlfriend channels (or something) a "gypsy god" who predicts his future:

"Your father is going to die, very soon. Your bassist will have trouble with his heart. And you will have a deformed child," she told me.

"Will I get a record deal?" I asked.

I kept reading, waiting for evidence that Peligro understood how funny "Will I get a record deal?" is, but it never arrived, probably waylaid by a large ego in the road.

But the honesty it took to write about his relapses more than makes up for that, and I hope this book becomes a standard text in the recovery community—a bookmarked standard text, I hasten to add. —Jim Woster (A Barnacle Book, 453 South Spring St., Suite 531, LA, CA 90013, rarebirdlit.com)

Fastcore Photos

By Will Butler, 128 pgs.

This book collects the first three issues of its namesake. The primary concern of the zine was to document the punk scene, local and non-local, as

it happened in and around North Carolina, not just the next town or two over, but also in states like Virginia, and Maryland. Musically, this was focused (no pun intended, but what the hell!) on the heavier and thrashier end of things, with photos of bands like Coke Bust, Bear Trap, Dropdead, Thou, Negative Approach, and the sort. First issue was all photos, and the last two mixed it up with show reviews, and interviews (Backslider, Curmudgeon, Noisear, Sectarian Violence) that kept it basic and mainly focused on the music. Though it was only a couple years ago, it feels like a long time, and things have changed considerably since then, as more than a few bands in here are gone, and some have grown even bigger.

This also comes with a DVD of live footage from bands like Corrosion Of Conformity playing in what looks to be a basement (I would have loved to have been there!), Coke Bust, The Kills, Backslider, Curmudgeon, Despise You, and more. All shot on a single camera with dirty sound quality. Would you expect less? It's all part of the experience.

Will's passion for this stuff comes through, and makes a jaded and bitter bastard like me somewhat envious. He documented *a lot* of shows, and spent a lot of time and energy getting all this together, and continues working away in the DIY salt mines with his label and various musical projects. —M.Avg (Shookup, shookup.com)

Indie Spiritualist: A No Bullshit Exploration of Spirituality

By Chris Grosso, 242 pgs.

If, as Katy Perry said, it was like someone stomping on a kitten when Kanye West garishly ripped the microphone from Taylor Swift's hand, mid-speech, at some award show, then I probably have my kitten-stomping boots on right now. That's because I'm about to garishly throw out a handful of less-than-glowing comments on Chris Grosso's *Indie Spirituality*, a book that, at the time of this writing, has not a single Amazon rating of less than five full stars. It's also a book heavily decorated with glowing and giddy blurbs burped up by a swooning platoon of luminaries from not only the spirituality industry, but other celebrities ranging from hip hop artists, hardcore punks, and skateboarders.

Believe me, I'm not thrilled to equate myself with a blithering megalomaniacal chucklefuck like Kanye West. But it seems like dirty work that someone with kitten stomping boots has to do. I'll see if I can do it without Kanye's messianic complex.

So what is it that makes me want to stomp this adorable little kitten of a book, so beloved by discerning Amazon reviewers and spiritually-hip famous people alike? What could I possibly find even slightly disagreeable about this book that seems to coax glowing reviews out of people like a buttery smooth pickpocket? It certainly seems as innocuous and big-hearted as Taylor Swift herself.

Chris Grosso certainly comes across as an eminently likable guy. There's something downright neighborly that comes through his writing; like if he lived next door to you, he'd occasionally mow your lawn just to be nice, and wouldn't want anything for it. And his personal story of redemption is certainly compelling enough. Similar to *Dharma Punx* author Noah Levine's back-story, it's a gritty crash-and-burn tale of too much booze and drugs combined with too much punk rock nihilism—and then the phoenix-from-the-ashes like ascent to sobriety and, eventually, spiritual awakening. Or as he puts it in the book, "I engulfed myself in a completely no-bullshit exploration of spirituality. I found that having a deeply ingrained *question everything* punk-rock mind-set, which taught me not to accept everything at face value, allowed me to take a brutally honest look at the teachings of the various spiritual and religious paths I was exploring."

Grosso's brand of "indie spirituality" is a syncretistic amalgam of mostly eastern traditions, but his emphasis is primarily a Ram Dass-influenced Bhakti Yoga. This is a devotional branch of yoga, expressed by Grosso himself through his practices of chanting and performing kirtan music, and not the Americanized version of yoga that features various exotic calisthenics and women wearing Lululemon tights—a high priced article of clothing that, in truth, functions both as a status symbol and a sort of candy wrapper.

In our late capitalist society everything comes in wrappers. Katy Perry comes in wrappers, Kanye West comes in douchey wrappers, as does just about any commodity we're encouraged to desire. But even the things—like, in this case, spirituality—that are supposed to help us manage, if not liberate us from, our desires—they also come in eye-catching, come-hither wrappers.

Indie Spiritualist, of course, comes in a wrapper too, one adorned with spray painted stencil lettering and a punky back alley motif. A blurb on the back cover makes a point of steering our attention to the fact that the author is sinfully festooned with multiple tattoos, as if that wasn't already perfectly apparent by the adjoining photo of the author in a short sleeve shirt. Why is it important that we know he's tattooed? Is the implication that his spiritual vision is somehow more "hard won" than that of a puffy, pallid,

tattoo-less boob like Eckhart Tolle—and therefore, to be believed as being more genuine?

Were we somehow to know that Mr. Grosso is the proud owner of a dick piercing, would this make his spiritual “package” more fetching than that of a Tolle type, (assuming that his reproductive organs are not decorated with jewelry)?

And speaking of tattoos, what are we to make of a book whose pages are as dotted with QR codes as the author’s punk rock hide is tattooed? In an obvious attempt to curry favor with tech-junkies who read a book with one hand while manipulating their smart phone with the other, many of the chapters of this book feature QR codes, linking the tech-savvy reader to instructional videos, related writings and songs by bands I’ve never heard of. On one hand, it could be argued that sprinkling QR codes throughout the pages opens the “book experience” into a digitally interactive, multi-dimensional experience beyond (and some might say “superior to”) the mere Gutenbergian task of reading. On the other hand, littering QR codes throughout the pages of *I.S.* is about as aesthetically pleasing as piles of robot droppings. And is there anything more symbolic of creeping corporate crud than QR codes? Grosso admonishes his readers to “question everything,” so I ask: is an author who “fortifies” his books with the robot scat of QR codes someone who himself truly questions *everything*—including the all-pervasive, ever growing corporate technocracy and the ubiquitous herd mentality of the app-happy and not-so-mindful early adopters?

I guess I should probably just accept that ugly little QR codes showing up in the pages of my soon-to-be-old-fashioned books is now just inevitable, like rigor mortis. They are part of the mortification process, little more than mushy death sores popping up as paper books let out their last gasp as they depart this world, making room for the sickly, buzzing hives of light known as e-books. Seen this way, it’s merely evolution. Out with the old, in with the new.

So maybe Grosso’s unquestioning embrace of all things Silicon Valley isn’t a blind spot at all, but simply the integrating attitude of a healthy “integral” personality, in the Wilberian sense.

these were the elevated souls that Wilber christened his “rude boys,” a hokey label meant to honor certain spiritual teachers whose unconventional “upaya” included Kanye-like displays of cockiness, narcissism, and Caligula-like self-indulgences. But, as case after case of sexual indiscretions with disciples surfaced, the Rude Boy label eventually turned out to be actually more of a booby prize for being a self-inflated, ego-maniacal scumbag in a spiritual wrapper.

So while emblazoning your book with an effusive endorsement from Wilber is probably considered a shrewd marketing ploy, it could be a spiritual kiss-of-death roughly equivalent to the *Sports Illustrated* Cover Jinx.

But far be it from me to criticize that from which another person draws his/her inspiration and insights, even with my stomping boots on. Because I firmly believe that, like birds pecking bits of undigested grains out of cow pies, humans can find enlightenment (a cow pie of a word) in the so-called lowliest of places. One of the things I liked best about *Indie Spirituality* is Grosso’s quoting of authors typically considered outside the pale of spirituality, like William Burroughs, Charles Bukowski, Hunter Thompson, etc. But stepping into what many see as the borderline “cultish” Integral World of Ken Wilber can leave the aspirant more benighted than enlightened. Though, to be fair, that’s a charge that could be leveled against almost any spiritual teacher, cultish stench or not.

To take off my kitten-stomping boots off, to let my dogs breath a bit, it’s hard to be too critical of anyone finding sense and solace anywhere in this particularly numbing time in history. You really can’t blame anyone for trying to make sense out of all this absurdity and trying to feel alive again. A society ours, like no society before it, so devilishly fans the flames of your desires while simultaneously keeping you as functionally bound as a veal calf, provides a fertile bed of frustration that is likely to give mulchy ground to the growth of weedy characters ranging from spiritual seekers to serial killers. And that’s not to mention the rare occasion of the individual who finds himself or herself suddenly, inexplicably, outside of time and space and staring face to face with the “mysterium tremendum,” a deeply, dizzyingly disorienting experience so far removed from describable mundane “reality”

“...as aesthetically pleasing as piles of robot droppings. Is there anything more symbolic of creeping corporate crud than QR codes?”

—Aphid Peewit, *Indie Spiritualist: A No Bullshit Exploration of Spirituality*

And that brings me to one of Grosso’s main influences and a personage whose bald, bespectacled, humorless countenance floats spectrally throughout the pages of this book. I’m talking, of course, about the Mr. Clean of Consciousness himself, the Great Tidy-Upper of the Universe, the Hugh Hefner of stratified reality paradigms, Ken Wilber. The influence of Wilber’s AQAL—“all quadrants, all levels”—syncretistic approach can be seen in Grosso’s all-embracing, multi-tradition spiritual blend. Wilber’s nondual syncretism, of course, can be seen as a more prim, less playful extension of the syncretism of his predecessor, the rascal sage Alan Watts—an early influence Wilber eventually distanced himself from, as was the fashion amongst spiritually-minded yuppies in the uptight ‘80s. Further back still, the spirit of Wilber’s syncretism can be traced to the works of the Huayan master Fazang and even to the dualistic synthesis of Mani, but maybe especially back to the giant of Korean Buddhism, Wonhyo, from whom Kenny seems to have appropriated the term “one taste” as a label accentuating the unitive principal “behind” his spiritual spectrum, the non-obstructive interrelationship between phenomena and noumenon.

But for all I know, maybe the inspiration for Wilber’s “integral approach” goes back no further than the hippy-trippy new age mish-mash of Father Yod. Who knows?

Regardless, I’m willing to stick my neck out and say that I think Wilber is at least partially right when he says that everyone is partially right. The problem might be that Wilber himself seems to forget about his own partially-rightness.

And if you’re looking for evidence of Wilber’s mere partial rightness, you have to look no further than fallen spiritual studs like Adi Da, Genpo Merzel, Andrew Cohen, and Marc Gafni—all once endowed with the cache that goes with a hearty Wilber endorsement. Though now a rogue’s gallery,

as to seem utterly and profoundly different—though its final shock is that is not really different than mundane reality.

While I’m still somewhat suspicious of all the glowing, oozingly positive reviews this book has reaped, both from the famous and the merely mouthy, I can see that it does have a certain easy appeal. The strength of Grosso’s approach, beyond any millennial-friendly tattoos or his easy conversational tone, is his welcoming, big-tent style of spiritual syncretism. In this way he has a big-hearted affability more similar to his hero Ram Dass than the cold, constipated big-minded rationality of his other hero, Ken Wilber. Despite any claims to “grittiness,” *Indie Spirituality* is actually very user friendly and easily digestible. It’s Hostess Twinkies for the soul. It might not be totally inaccurate to say this is entry level nondual spirituality in an indie/punk wrapper; kind of Eckhart Tolle with tattoos and possibly a dink stud. I would imagine that fans of Noah Levine’s *Dharma Punks* would find this book very agreeable. But people who have plowed through Nisargadatta Maharaj’s *I Am That*—or even some of the more turquoise colored Wilberites—might find *Indie Spirituality* on the remedial side. But there’s certainly nothing wrong with that and it may prove to be the perfect starting point for many people out there. In truth, kitten-stomping boots are total over-kill to a Kanye-esque extreme.

Here’s hoping Grosso doesn’t turn out to be yet another burnt-out husk of a Rude Boy littering the spiritual scene, because then no amount of millennial-friendly tattoos and dick piercings will save him. I’ve now left a less than glowing, but far from negative review of *Indie Spirituality* and my work now here is done. I don’t know about you, but I feel like the world is a little bit better balanced now. —Aphid Peewit (Beyond Words, beyondword.com)

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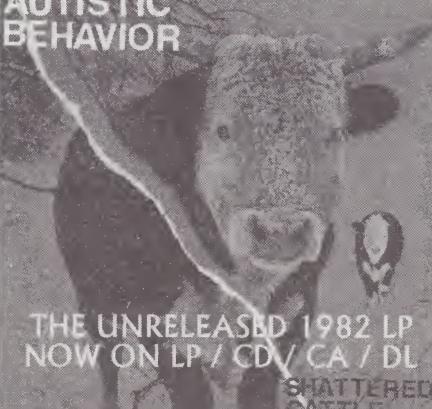
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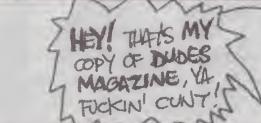
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“Somehow LB pirouettes between *yuck* and *yay*.”

—Sean Arenas, *It's Alright: A Truckface Anthology Volume One*

It's Alright: A Truckface Anthology Volume One

By LB Briggs, 360 pgs.

Personal zines are a mixed bag. The enjoyability of reading about someone's daily activities entirely depends on the likability of the writer, the focus of the content, and the excitement conjured from everyday minutia. I've read some coma-inducing perzines with absolutely no filter. Sure, it may be healthy for a writer to stream out pages upon pages of cat anecdotes and confused, humorous diatribes, but I have absolutely no interest in consuming them. Thankfully, *It's Alright* (collected here are issues seven through eleven of *Truckface*) is a zine collection that is well-written, rich with insightful anecdotes, and bares all its brittle bones—although lacking a singular focus and a tad overly dense.

LB is appreciably blunt. She fillets the fat attributed to non-fiction writing and exposes the bullshit of daily American life. Each zine is a densely packed account of minor day-to-day atrocities. From peddling rancid food at a cut-rate deli to a paranoid old lady slashing her bicycle tires, her nearly becoming a fetishized hairy armpit model, to contemplating the mysterious woman who consistently urinates on the toilet seat at work, these stories are equally as obscene as they are endearing. Somehow LB pirouettes between *yuck* and *yay*.

The sheer density of this anthology is astounding. Some of the zines collected run over sixty whopping pages, but zine anthologies, much like discographies, are typically hit-or-miss. I found myself burrowing into the over three hundred page collection, wondering if some sections could have been edited out for both length and quality. Yet, grumbling that there is *too* much content isn't a ding so much as I just wish that this was a greatest hits collection rather than a compendium, because the standout sections are sandwiched between less savory slices that could have been left on the cutting board.

Ultimately, perzines are not innately objective driven, like fiction or record reviews, as they tend to meander, but each issue of *Truckface* is representative of a significant time in Briggs' life. Issue seven documents low-wage drudgery, issue eight is her leaving her comfort zone and traveling abroad, and, finally, issue eleven finds Briggs' slouching into adulthood through employment in public education. Issue eleven is especially cohesive compared to some of the more roughly assembled middle issues. LB seems to be the most centered when recording her misadventures at various schools with a multitude of young people. By the end, I became attached to Briggs' voice, like a friend who's willing to tell it like it is. I can see myself seeking out her company through more recent issues of *Truckface*. —Sean Arenas (Mend My Dress Press, mendmydress.com)

Songs Only You Know: A Memoir

By Sean Madigan Hoen, 371 pgs.

Songs Only You Know opens with a young man walking down the dark streets of his suburban neighborhood with a baseball bat. He takes a few wild swings, takes out a mailbox, and keeps moving. He doesn't have a plan other than some vague hopes that his father will drive back and catch him in his headlights. The whole time songs play in his head, as yet, unwritten and unrefined. He's eighteen and his father, once his hero, has fallen deep into crack addiction. He has also stolen his daughter's car, disappearing for days. More than any young, nihilistic urge for release, he wants his father to see him—shirtless, maniacal, and on a rampage—to see his hurt, to express the anger at the pain his father's habit has caused his family. His dad doesn't return at all that night and his anger remains, deep and repressed.

The mark of a good writer or artist is what they can do with damage. How they reflect on it. How they calibrate the damage done to them by others, the damage they've done to others and the damage they've done to themselves. The subtle way they express how it lives in the body, remains in the back of the mind to be smoothed over with time or, perhaps, re-triggered. Many writers are unable to express this damage in a way that hits, in way that moves the reader. Their ego is too deeply entrenched. Chips remain on shoulders. Reparations are whined for and grudges kept. Sean rises above this when he tells his story.

At home, his family is disintegrating. His father's crack habit leaves everything in ruin: his parent's marriage, the family's stability, his body and mind. His sister falls into a catatonic depression and tries to take her life, a secret Sean promises to keep. His release is playing in a band notorious in Detroit for trashing venues, cutting themselves with knives, and leaving in their wake a mess of blood, plaster, and broken glass. More importantly, it's an unbound, raw, and cathartic expression of alienation and pain for Sean.

Offstage, he and his batshit crazy friends desperately seek oblivion through drugs, liquor, and violence. He's shitty to women who love him, unavailable when his sister desperately needs him, and taxes his mother who's suffered far more than enough. This is where his gift of nuance comes in. During the most intense scenes of bloody knuckles and drug binges, self-destruction, and crime, through walls of guitar feedback and amplified screaming, these passages become serene and almost quiet in the telling. In that moment, a scream into a mic, a hanging snip of dialogue, a movement of the body expresses perfectly the repression and the release, the fear and the aggression, the masculinity and vulnerability and the constant confusion of a desperate young man who's been dealt a shitty hand. It doesn't hit hard. It hits deep. —Craven Rock (Soho Press, Inc., 853 Broadway, NY, NY 10003, sohopress.com)



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Every Everything: The Music, Life and Times of Grant Hart: DVD

I wrote a while back that I had somewhat recently met Grant Hart—inaugurably Hüsker Dü's weirdest member—for the first time since the '80s. We knew each other a little bit Back In The Day from our bands playing shows together and such, and I wanted to see if he still remembered me. Our brief meeting left me bummed and disturbed—not so much because he didn't seem to remember me, my band, or my fanzine ((o the pain!)), but that he didn't even seem to be processing the fact that I was representing myself as someone he once knew, and did he remember whom I was? He recognized the fact that I was handing him a CD, but he absolutely positively gave no signs whatsoever that he knew I was talking to him, let alone listening to what I was saying, let alone comprehending what I was saying, let alone remembering me. It was like he had largely abandoned the idea of taking in signals from the outside world, or at least from the inhabitants of same.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that pretty much the only voice heard in this documentary ((Memoir? Soliloquy?)) is Grant's. Once in a while, the guy behind the camera will ask a question, or there'll be a brief interview clip ((like from *The Late Show with Joan Rivers*, good lord, kill the '80s right now)), but, other than that, it's pretty much Grant Hart talking about Grant Hart ((and, yes, occasionally Bob and Greg)). There are no testimonial snippets from bandmates, or relatives, or drug buddies, or ex-lovers, or scene luminaries; no external voices to help spackle together a portrait of This Enigmatic Grant Hart Fellow. It's just Grant Hart, telling us what he



“My brain is completely failing to process how this Orville Redenbacher motherfucker could really be Grant Hart.”

—Rev. Nørb, *Every Everything: The Music, Life and Times of Grant Hart*

would like us to know about the music, life, and times of Grant Hart. Now, Grant's a smart guy. I like his words, and what he says. That said, without the occasional external personage relating a few heady tales o' humanity ((like the time Grant, upset that a curfew enforced by an Oshkosh hall owner caused Hüsker Dü's set to be cut short, threw himself onto a folding table and pissed all over himself in protest)) to kinda balance things out, he really comes off as some old, pretentious coot in this film. *Hey, you want fair and balanced, 'watch Fox News! This is the Grant Hart show! I talk to myself and you listen! None can ask fairer than that!* And, furthermore, I, for one, have a really hard time coming to grips that this bespectacled, bird-like creature on-screen is the same Grant Hart I used to know in the '80s—the guy who looked like that chunky stoner from high school you one day find out has got a great record collection and has read way more books than you have. My brain is completely failing to process how this Orville Redenbacher motherfucker could really be Grant Hart. I mean, I dunno, these days the guy looks like a cross between Ichabod Crane, William S. Burroughs ((whose friendship with Grant is discussed briefly here)), and Jamison, the nerd character from WWF wrestling about twenty years ago. His voice is this high, pinched creak; it doesn't even sound like it's coming from the same throat that sang “Never Talking to You Again” and “The Girl Who Lives on Heaven Hill.” It's just weird. Speaking of weird, this movie jumps around chronologically like it's powered by a defective Tardis, with

little obvious rhyme or reason. A segment on Grant releasing his first solo album in 1989 will prompt a segment on a 1981 Hüsker show, which will in turn prompt a digression as to how Greg Ginn formed SST Records in 1978. I'd ask what the filmmakers were thinking, but would fear receiving a ten-minute monologue by Grant about Brion Gysin's “cut-up” method in return. Now. All this said, this movie does feature Grant's take on pretty much everything one would want Grant's take on, so, clearly, anyone with even a passing interest in Hüsker Dü or even in rock biographies/memoirs/soliloquies in general will derive functional utility from viewing this. All I know is that there is a recurring motif where Grant walks around the grassy lot where his burned-to-the-ground house used to be, pretending that he's showing off the now-imaginary house to imaginary houseguests, and, based on my last interactions with him, this seems about exactly right. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This film features multiple still photos from the Madison Hüsker Dü show on April 8th, 1983, where my old band, Suburban Mutilation, was an opening act. Also, i once bought a copy of *MAD* magazine #138 at the St. Paul bookstore that Grant is seen entering early in the film, and drank with my bandmates in the parking lot of the CVS visible when he is leaving. —Rev. Nørb (MVD Visual, mvdvisual.com)



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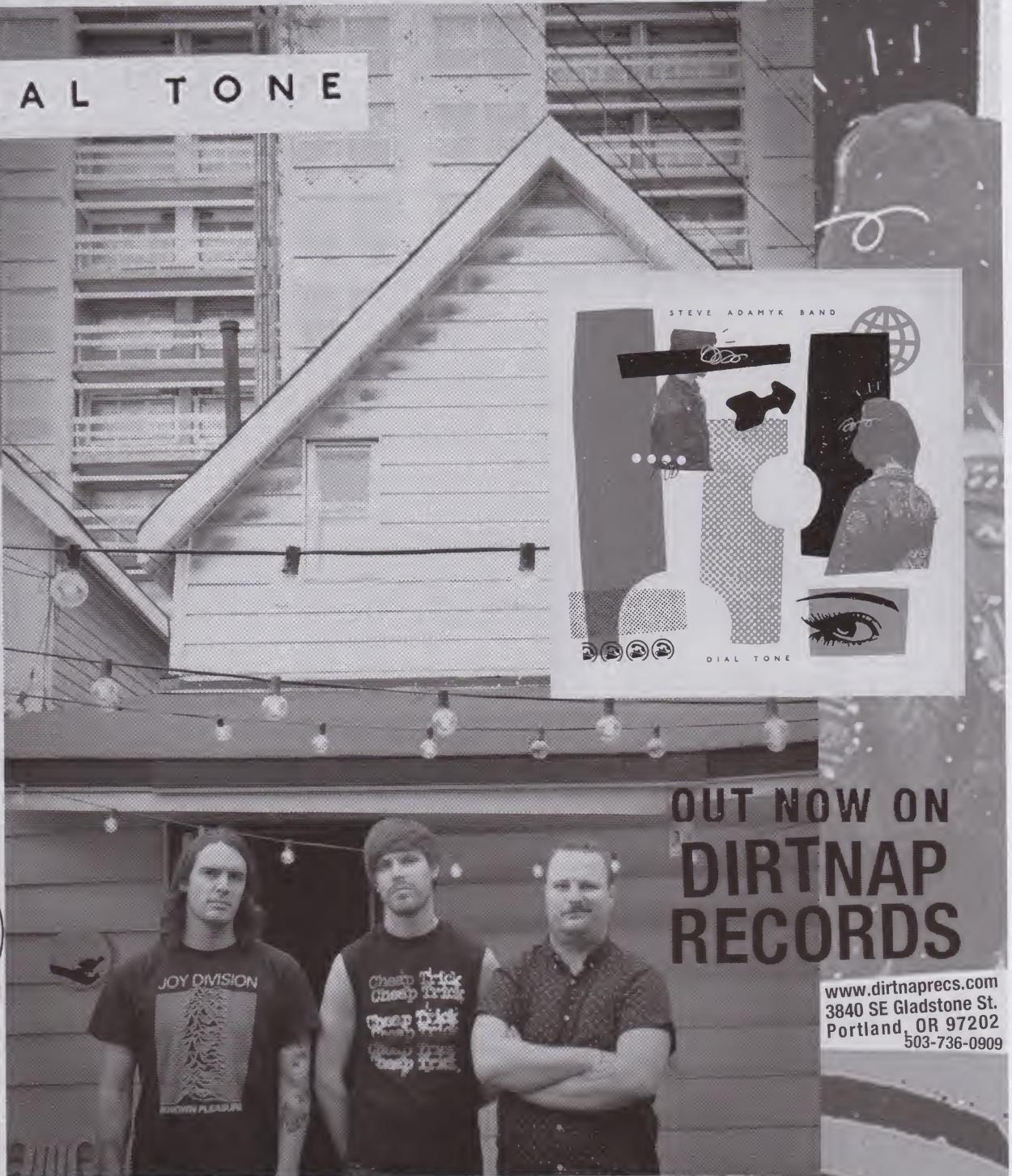
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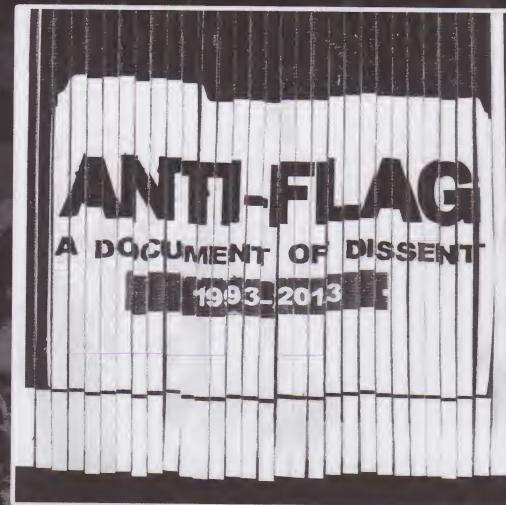
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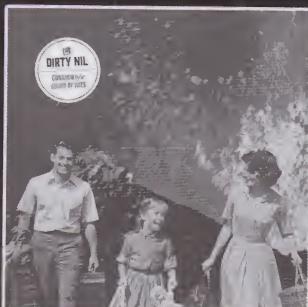


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